ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: MI LUGAR ES AQUÍ (MY PLACE IS HERE): LATINO MALE VOICES AND THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

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In this collective case study, the voices of 10 academically successful Latino males were privileged to uncover the factors they believe contribute to their success in college. The participants in this study range in age from 18 to 24 and are from diverse Latino backgrounds including Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. Each Latino male participant maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or greater and began his higher education experience at the local community college. Using extant literature on various forms of capital, care, and patterns of transition, a conceptual model was created to explore how participants' describe and understand academic achievement.

Through individual interviews, focus groups, a survey, and participant selected artifacts, the power of care and the importance of social capital and community cultural wealth emerge as salient factors in academically successful Latino male experiences. In this study, care was redefined by drawing on the scholarship of Noddings (2005), Gay, (2010), and scholars who articulate critical conceptions of care. Other salient factors that contributed to participants' collegiate academic achievement included Latino cultural traditions (i.e., *familismo, consejos,*

and *bien educado*), caring teachers and professors, coaches and mentors, and the role of the community college and community-based organizations.

This study also found that because of care, and the values inhered in caring relationships (i.e., trust, support, and care), participants were able to gain access to a variety of capital as well as other important resources (i.e., transition strategies such as code switching and discerning expectations) that they were able to leverage toward their academic achievement in college. Implications for theory, research, and practice are presented with an emphasis placed on creating caring spaces that cultivate and nurture the academic achievement of Latino males in higher education environments.

“MI LUGAR ES AQUÍ” (MY PLACE IS HERE): LATINO MALE VOICES AND THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN COLLEGE

by

Jason Rivera

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Professor Victoria-María MacDonald, Chair
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Professor Kimberly A. Griffin
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Professor Jennifer D. Turner

Dedication

To Enid F. Margolies (Doc) for inspiring me to “Go confidently in the direction of my dreams” and helping me to imagine a happier life. I love you.

To Ricardo N. Arrington for loving me enough to give me the space to become a Doctor. I love you.

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I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.
—Henry David Thoreau

On my 21st birthday, I received a plaque with the quote "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined" (Henry David Thoreau). Since then, I have vigorously pursued my dream of living a life markedly different from the lives of those I witnessed growing up as a child. The quote above speaks to what I have learned over the trajectory of my life—pursuing my dreams has allowed me to meet with unexpected successes. Throughout my life, I have been blessed by the presence of angels. It is the only logical explanation for how I was able to sustain through a childhood and adolescence plagued by chaos and turmoil. I call upon those angels now, as I seek to put words to the page as an offering of gratitude for the countless people who helped make becoming Dr. Jason Rivera possible.

To God and The Universe

In all things great and small, I give thanks for the multitude of blessings and the fortitude and strength that have carried me thus far. In all ways, I have learned that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). In my darkest hours, I have always had a light that guided my path and pushed me to continue striving for all that I have become and all that I have yet to be. That light and the fire that burns within me are only small examples of the greatness of Your mercy. I humbly thank You for the grace and goodness that have embraced my life and made this accomplishment possible.

Doc: Enid F. Margolies, Ph.D.

For all those times you stood by me, for all the truth that you made me see, for all the joy you brought to my life, for all the wrong that you made right, for every dream you made come true, for all the love I found in you, I'll be forever thankful!
—Because You Loved Me (Lyrics by Diane Warren)

Doc, in every real sense, you have been the mother I longed for when I was a child. Over the decades, I have felt your unconditional love and support of me, which have allowed me to move through life fearlessly. You have been like the wind, lifting me ever so gently toward every milestone I have experienced since high school. Please know that you are my hero—a true reflection of love and everything that is good in this world. Because of you, I dreamed of the possibility of becoming Dr. Rivera, not because of the credentials, but because I wanted to emulate the goodness that I saw in you. Even still, I strive to be for others what you have always been for me—a beacon of hope and a source of care and support. Thank you for nurturing my intellectual curiosities and for encouraging me to always pursue my dreams. I love you more than words will ever express.

Mr. Incredible: Ricardo N. Arrington

"Some people care too much. I think it's called love."
—A. A. Milne

For supporting me in all that I do, for loving me despite my flaws, for lifting me up when I fall, for holding my hand when I need reassurance, for telling me the truth even when I don't want to hear it, for protecting me from harm and shielding me from hurt, for loving me unconditionally, and for always making me feel loved—I

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marks on our relationships. Please know that the love I have for each of you is unwavering, and I sincerely hope that this accomplishment provides you with the encouragement and motivation to vigorously pursue your dreams. I believe in you, but more importantly, thank you for believing in me. I also love you very much!

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"Be careful of the people you call your friends for they are the family members you get to choose!"

— Jason Rivera

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"When you find people who not only tolerate your quirks, but celebrate them with glad cries of "Me, Too!" be sure to cherish them. Because those weirdos are your tribe."

—Gabrielle Chackal

To one of my dearest friends, Jacia, for always lifting me up in prayer and pushing me lovingly across the finish line, I thank you! You welcomed me into your life and your family and provided me with unwavering support and unconditional

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Invisible Institutional Agents

I was five years old when I first entered a school building and found my way to my kindergarten classroom. I did not know then that it would be the start of life-long love affair with education. My life's journey has been one riddled with devastating lows and soaring highs, but the one constant throughout those experiences was the sanctuary I found through school. So, it seems fitting to offer a note of gratitude to all of the women and men who worked in the many schools I attended that made sure I felt cared for as I learned to "go confidently in the direction of my dreams" (Henry David Thoreau) in pursuit of a markedly different life than my childhood and adolescence. To all of the "invisible" lunchroom ladies, transportation and attendance staff, safety and security officers, paraprofessionals

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"Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It's not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything."

— Muhammad Ali

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"There will come a time, when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning."

— Louis L' Amour

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As a Latino male enrolled in a doctoral program, I was very isolated. In fact, for several years, I was the only Latino male in the Minority and Urban Education program, and in my cohort I was the only Latino. Thus, it became incredibly important for me to develop a network of support outside of the program. I found a supportive Latino network in the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) Graduate Student Fellowship Program (GSFP). After participating in the GSFP, I became acquainted with several Latina/o graduate

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If you built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

—Henry David Thoreau

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If your name does not appear, please accept this heartfelt "thank you" as an expression of my sincerest gratitude and consider the omission an unintentional act of age and not a lack of appreciation for your contributions to my becoming.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Vignette #1: Early Childhood

My earliest childhood memories are colored by a neglected childhood and a home environment that forced me to grow up faster than my peers. By the time I was in first grade, my mother was an unemployed drug-addicted single parent with three boys and no family support. As a result, I learned at an early age that school was my sanctuary. It was, in every real sense, the only stability my childhood offered. Amidst the brick and mortar, and the waxed floors and wooden desks, I silently became the architect of a family. I created in my teachers substitute parents, and in my counselors, relatives that I could go to for a hug or a kind word. I knew they cared about me and because of it, in school I shined. I developed a passion for learning, and yearned to read books. I started writing short stories and eventually developed into a poet. I looked for ways to gain recognition from teachers and would work harder to ensure I received it.

Vignette #2: Adolescence

At fifteen years old, I was a homeless high school drop out working at a neighborhood mom-and-pop restaurant bussing tables. I made just enough money to rent a room and was able to eat when I worked. Leaving school was a very difficult choice. I was a very active student, serving in several student organizations including student government, the school newspaper, the mock trial team, and the Council for Unity. However, although I attended a very large urban high school where students routinely dropped out without anyone noticing, my absence was noted. Shortly after dropping out, I received a surprise visit from Dr. Enid Margolies, the Assistant Principal for Guidance at the High School I no longer attended. Even now, I don't know how Doc, as I came to

affectionately call her, knew where to find me. Fortunately, she developed a plan for me to return to school. She was passionate about my success, showing me love and compassion at a time when I felt most abandoned. But, she was also tough! She made sure I knew that I was not entitled to any special treatment because of my life circumstances and that I could be successful with hard work and determination.

Vignette #3: Young Adult

Going to college was as much a necessity as it was a choice. For me, college was my way out of the nightmares that I endured in my early childhood and adolescence. Thus, by the time I started college I was ready for a fresh start and an opportunity to explore the world beyond the inner cities in which I grew up. Manhattanville College, a small liberal arts school set on a beautiful campus in an affluent suburban community, offered me more than I could have imagined. With a resident population of approximately 600 students and roughly 400 commuters, Manhattanville's greatest strengths were its small class sizes and supportive atmosphere. While there, I was a rock star, serving as the Freshman Class President, Clubs Council Coordinator, Latin American Student Organization President, and the President of the Student Government. In each of those roles, I was able to cultivate valuable relationships that I still continue to maintain. Manhattanville became my home, literally and figuratively.

Reflection

I have been the benefactor of caring relationships with teachers and administrators since my elementary school years. These caring relationships, inhered with social capital, are the reason why I have been able to overcome what might seem like insurmountable obstacles—a drug addicted single mother, homelessness, physical abuse, and sexual

assault—to arrive at the writing of my dissertation. When I became a public school teacher, I became more critically aware of how caring relationships impacted my life and how those relationships provided me with greater access to opportunities outside of my urban community (i.e., school trips to college and overnight leadership training opportunities). The discovery was serendipitous. In my teacher-training program, I was taught to be a reflective practitioner and to journal about my teaching. I took journal writing very seriously; I viewed it as an opportunity to decompress and reflect on the challenges I encountered in the classroom. I also used it as an opportunity to explore questions about my teaching and my students and to reflect on my own educational experiences. The subject of one journal entry—"What worked for me when I was in school?" was the genesis of my interest in exploring caring as a concept more deeply. I didn't realize then that caring was more than a "warm and fuzzy feeling" (Noddings, 2012) and that real caring relationships are imbued with social capital that can be stored and used later for upward mobility.

My mother was a single parent who fell victim to cocaine and crack in the 1980s, during the height of New York City's crack epidemic. Her drug addiction caused her to abandon my two brothers and me, resulting in us being shuffled between paternal and maternal grandparents, forcing us to attend 6 elementary schools and 2 middle schools before each of us decidedly chose different high school/life pathways. My mother's battle with drugs, which she ultimately lost in 1993, the absence of a father figure, my educational experiences, and the particularly distinct life trajectories of my brothers and I

provide the backdrop and context for why I am most interested in understanding Latino[1] male schooling experiences.

Initially, I was interested in looking at the role of care in Latino male schooling experiences because I am a bicultural (Puerto Rican and Panamanian) Latino male and I am confident that care is the reason why I was able to persist beyond high school and to ultimately pursue a PhD. However, reflecting more critically on my own experience, caring was only one of many factors that contributed to my academic achievement. After several years of personal reflection and educational research, I can attribute my academic success to many factors that can be characterized by various forms of capital (e.g., social, cultural, aspirational, resistant, and navigational). Thus, I have developed a heightened curiosity for what Latino male students in college believe are the factors that contribute to their academic success.

Introduction

Recent attention to the rapidly growing Latino population during the last three decades overlooks centuries-long histories of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Latino Americans in the U.S. The history of Latinos in the U.S. is multi-varied and complex according to subgroup, generation, and historical relations to the U.S. (e.g., colonization or annexation) (MacDonald, 2004; San Miguel, Jr. & Donato, 2010). Equitable educational access of Latinos has varied according to social class, Spanish language, segregation, politics, phenotype, and geography. In general, however, Latinos have historically and purposely been deprived of equitable educational resources, facilities, and high school and college access until the civil rights period (MacDonald, 2004, 2013;

[1] I will use the terms Latino/a and Hispanic interchangeably and when referring to gender I will rely on the terms Latino males and Latinas.

Gonzalez, 2000; García & Castro, 2011).

Now, in the first decades of the 21st century, the historical legacies we bequeathed to generations of Latinos are confronting us today. Latino males, in particular, are the least educated of any racial/ethnic group in the U.S., most likely to drop out of high school and obtain blue collar low wage work (Torres & Fergus, 2012; Rodríguez, Argeros & Miyawki, 2012), and least likely to enroll in college (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). In light of these alarming statistics, which researchers continue to publish (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Gándara, 2010), public policy and political will must create different and more productive pathways and solutions to the Latino educational challenge.

The impact of the fast growing Latino population has invoked terms such as "the demographic imperative" (Maxwell, 2012). According to the 2010 Census, there are approximately 50.5 million Latinos in this country, comprising 16 percent of the overall population. In 2050, that number is expected to nearly double to 30 percent (U.S. Census, 2010a, 2010b). As a result, bolstering the potential of Latinos in shaping our country's economic and political climate is critical. Challenges facing Latinos, and other communities of color, are well documented and include gaps in health care, employment and education. But, these challenges are not just a Latino problem—they are the nation's problem, too.

The "Latino issue" is of particular import to the nation for two intersecting reasons: The U.S. population is rapidly aging as the Latino population rapidly grows *and* the Latino population is markedly younger than most, if not all other ethnic groups (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Demographers have already begun identifying the very real

economic dangers of an aging population, noting slow economic growth, deeper recessions, and slower recoveries as potential outcomes of the "gray tsunami" (Thompson, 2012). And, as the U.S. population continues to age, the younger Latino population continues to grow. Consequently, it will become increasingly important to better understand the demographic characteristics of Latinos as well as how to educate and develop their talent in order to ensure that the U.S. can maintain its footing as a political leader in the world and continue to meet its human capital demands.

A younger Latino population is a national issue for several reasons, one of which is the fact that Latino children are now the largest group of students in the nation's public school system, yet the lowest enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs. According to a 2011 White House Report, "In today's American public school system, Latinos are by far the largest minority group, numbering more than 12.4 million in the country's elementary, middle and high schools" (Winning the Future, p. 2). Yet, Latinos boast the highest high school dropout rates and lowest college enrollment and completion rates, with only 13% of Latinos earning a bachelor's degree and only 4% completing a graduate or professional degree program (p. 13). The abysmal college completion rates are particularly alarming when you consider that "in today's global economy, a high-quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite to success" (p. 13). Education and our nation's economic progress and promise are inextricably linked, which is one of the most compelling reasons to address the educational challenges facing Latinos.

We know that the U.S. labor force is already becoming more diverse. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, Latinos comprise 16 percent of the labor force at nearly

25 million (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). In 2018, this number is expected to increase to 18 percent. Of the total number of Latinos in the labor force, 58 percent are men and 42 percent are women. Yet, "employed Latinos are least likely to be college graduates than either Whites or African Americans" (Cárdenas & Kerby, 2012). We also know that the nature of work has continued to evolve as we have moved beyond a postindustrial economy toward a more knowledge-based workforce. The shift to a knowledge-based workforce that will drive the U.S. economy cannot be understated, as it will have very real consequences for our human capital needs. Whereas, it used to be possible to secure a stable and well paying job, often protected by a union, with a high school diploma, today's worker must be equipped with a college degree and the ability to think critically and perform more cognitive tasks (analyzing, organizing, programming) (Thompson, 2012; Winning the Future, 2011).

When put into context, the macro level challenges Latinos face can be offset by a high quality college education. Yet, Latino students are less likely than Whites to graduate high school and if they do, they are least likely to enroll in post-secondary education, and those that do often do not graduate (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011). These educational disparities did not just emerge. On the contrary, the disparities are the result of prolonged discrimination and segregation that began with Mexicans following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and continued with other Latino populations (Puerto Ricans especially) through segregated schools, language policies, and other culturally subtractive schooling processes (MacDonald, 2004; San Miguel, Jr. & Donato, 2010).

In fact, from the first encounters between Spaniards and Native Americans—Anglos and Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other members of the Latin American diaspora—have demonstrated a high value upon education as a means of economic, political, and social maintenance and upward mobility. Equitable opportunities and access to quality educational facilities have posed a formidable challenge to Latinos in U.S. history (MacDonald et al., 2007). The Latino community has displayed persistence, courage, sacrifice, and heterogeneity in its response to discrimination. Whether the issue concerns whether undocumented students can receive in-state college tuition, if Spanish can be utilized in the schools without punishment, or resisting the eradication of Mexican American history courses (such passed in Tucson, Arizona in 2010), Latino communities have never taken for granted their constitutional rights. Through collective action, including political and civic engagement, they have not remained silent, reminding the U.S. that in order for a healthy democracy to function all of its citizens, not only a select few, must have access to equitable quality education (MacDonald, 2013).

Disparities in Latino educational access and achievement are reflected in extant literature regarding educational outcomes for all groups in the U.S. Paralleling much of the Black experience, Latinos and African Americans often rival each other for the lowest performance rankings on educational metrics (e.g., high school and college completion rates). The coupling of Black and Latinos together in educational research is not uncommon and often most reflected in literature that focuses on gender related issues. Noguera and Hurtado (2012) also note that one of the reasons Black and Latino boys are commonly clustered together is because they share similar "disadvantages in educational settings—more likely to be suspended or expelled, to be placed in special education, or

drop out," but when this occurs "the experiences of Latino men are [rendered] less visible than those of Blacks" (p.5). This conflation is problematic as it essentializes Black and Latino male experiences and neglects to elucidate richer explanations of Latino male school experiences and their very distinct histories (MacDonald et al., 2007; Noguera & Hurtado, 2012).

Noguera and Hurtado (2012) examine the idea of Latino males as visible and invisible. Describing how day laborers congregate in clusters along roadsides to participate in an "informal, unregulated labor market that has become vital to the economy of the nation," (p. 1) they argue that working-class Latino men are visible when "they are of utility to the economy, but more often their talents and vulnerabilities are invisible to the larger society" (p. 1). Drawing on the image of day laborers clustering along roadsides helps frame how Latino males are viewed in the U.S. At first glance, they seem insignificant, yet they are a vital component of local and national economies. Therefore, Noguera and Hurtado (2012) rightfully use day laborers as a starting point for a larger conversation on the plight of the Latino male.

Latino males are not a monolithic group. On the contrary, Latino males engage in a variety of occupations and professions in the U.S., but "their role as a source of cheap, exploitable labor largely defines them in the media and increasingly in the popular imagination" (Noguera & Hurtado, 2012, p. 2). Thus, the prevailing image of Latino men as roadside workers has continued to position Latino males as undocumented, uneducated, Spanish speaking low wageworkers, preventing an appreciation for or examination of the vast diversity that comprises the group.

According to the U.S. Census (2010b), Latino men represent fewer than 6 percent of the U.S. population, but this number is actually higher because although the census also includes large numbers of undocumented Latino males living in the U.S. (Passel, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013), a great number of Latino males "are systematically undercounted by the census" (Noguera & Hurtado, 2012, p. 5). As a result, Latino males receive little "serious scholarly attention and alternate portrayals [of them as anything other than undocumented workers] provide flimsy protection from harassment, scrutiny, and distortion of the image of who they are and…why they have come to the U.S." (Noguera & Hurtado, 2012, p. 2). Consequently, the largely diverse experiences of Latino males go essentially unreported, helping to foster images of Latino males as macho, undocumented, non-voting, criminal, low wageworkers, and undereducated (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2010; Hurtado et al., 2010; Noguera & Hurtado, 2012; Torres & Fergus, 2012; Serrato, 2012; Valenzuela, Jr. & Pasillas, 2012).

Reframing Latino males as more than undocumented roadside workers is of critical importance. As the nation continues to be confronted with the rapidly growing Latino population, Latinos and Latino males, in particular have started to experience more prominence in scholarly investigations. Yet much of the educational research has framed Latinos as academic underachievers and high school and college dropouts. In fact, until recently, educational researchers have largely ignored the academic success of Latino males in college. Instead, scholars have historically focused on Latino male academic underachievement (Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). To counter this deficit oriented research and to more fully contextualize the challenges and successes of Latino males' baccalaureate experiences, this study

prioritizes Latino males as a subject and privileges their perspectives, opinions, and suggestions as a balance to the one dimensional characteristics reflected in numbers that highlight their high dropout and low college enrollment rates. Latino males are more than numbers; hearing their experiences, told in their voices, is an important contribution to the dearth of research involving them specifically as research subjects.

Thus far I have presented a rationale for why it is important to ensure the economic and educational viability of the growing number of Latinos in the United States. However, the rationale presented should not be the only driver motivating us to address the educational barriers Latinos experience in this country. On the contrary, it seems morally just to help Latinos use education as a transformative tool to enable their families and their offspring to escape the cycle of poverty and move beyond the poor and working classes typically occupied by undereducated and marginalized groups. Moreover, since education has been proven to be an important lever in socio-economic status mobility, it would seem we are obligated, as a nation, to ensure that everyone, regardless of race, culture and ethnicity, have equitable access to transformative educational opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Latinos, some two thirds of whom are Mexican, are the fastest growing minority group in the United States and every national projection indicates that the trend will continue. Furthermore, according to Ream (2005) "no group will do more to change the nation's schools in the next quarter century than the new ethnic mosaic of Latinos" (p. 201). Yet, Latinos are disproportionately underrepresented in higher education and have limited persistence within four-year higher education institutions. The Pew Hispanic

Center conducted a survey of Latino students, finding that "nearly nine-in-ten (89%) Latino young adults say that a college education is important for success in life, yet only about half that number (48%) say that they themselves plan to get a college degree" (Lopez, 2009). Clearly, Latinos understand the value of education, yet it is not translating into higher college enrollment and completion rates.

Compared to Latina females, Latino males are lower enrolled (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010) and least likely to complete college (Nevarez & Rico, 2007; Kohler & Lazarín, 2007). While there is evidence that gender achievement gaps among Latinos begin as early as pre-school (Winning the future, 2011; Liu, 2011), glaring disparities emerge in secondary schooling. In 2011, 14.6% of Latino males 16 to 24 years old were high school status dropouts[2], compared with 12.4% of Latina females (Mulligan et al., 2012). These macro statistics mask important subgroup and generational differences among Latinos, but even at the broad scale, high school drop out figures for Latino males fare poorly in comparison to White males (5.4%) (Mulligan et al., 2012). Table 1.1 provides a depiction of the status dropout rate comparisons for Whites and Latinos.

Table 1.1

Status dropout rates by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in percent

Race/Ethnicity	Male	Female
White	5.4	4.6
Hispanic	14.6	12.4

Source: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012006.pdf

[2] According to NCES, "'Status' dropouts are 16- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and who have not completed a high school program, regardless of when they left school. People who have received GED credentials are counted as high school completers. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in prisons, persons in the military, and other persons not living in households. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity except where otherwise noted" (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_128.asp).

Male Latinos have the highest drop out rates and lowest graduation rates among Whites and their female Latina counterparts. Still, perhaps the most alarming concern is that "no progress has been made in the percentage of Latinos gaining college degrees over a 20 year period, while other groups have seen significant increases in degree completion" (Gándara, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus' (2012) *Invisible No More: Understanding the Disenfranchisement of Latino Men and Boys* was the first comprehensive edited volume on Latino male experiences, exposing the dearth of scholarship on this school population that is rapidly growing and has faced formidable barriers to educational achievement. With a few notable exceptions (Sáenz et al., 2013; Carrillo, 2013; Irizarry, 2011a, 2011b; Liou et al., 2009; Miller, 2005; Miller & García, 2004), much of the research on Latino male college students has emphasized their academic underachievement. According to Sáenz and Ponjuan (2009), Latino males are "disappearing" from secondary and higher education institutions. Furthermore, the degree attainment gender gap continues to widen between Latinos and Latinas and despite these trends, there is little empirical research examining these issues.

This study privileged the voices of Latino male college students who achieved academic success in college to examine how various forms of capital, caring relationships, and students' patterns of transitions between the multiple spaces in which they reside operated independently and cooperatively to impact students' educational outcomes. To elicit Latino male college student perceptions, this collective case study utilized semi-structured and focus group interviews, a questionnaire, and artifact analysis.

Through these methods, I took an asset-based approach to better understand Latino educational experiences and present a more fulsome depiction of Latino males.

Research Questions

This study concerned Latino male perceptions about factors that contributed to their academic success in college. Extant literature suggests that various forms of capital influence Latino male experiences (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Saunders & Serna, 2004; Ream, 2003; Ceja, 2004; Ream & Stanton-Salazar, 2006; Nunez, 2009a). Thus, the conceptual model developed for this research examined how "Capital Conceptions" (various forms of capital including, for example social, cultural, aspirational, and navigational) influenced Latino male perceptions and experiences. Additionally, Latino male college experiences do not occur in isolation. Therefore, this study also examined how Latino males negotiated and transitioned between the various spaces (school, home, workplace, and community) they occupied. The study was thus guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors do Latino males perceive as contributing to their achievement in college?
2. How do various forms of capital influence Latino male college experiences?
3. How do Latino male college students negotiate and transition between the multiple spaces (school, family, workplace, and community) they occupy?
4. What role, if any, does "care" play in Latino male college students' academic achievement?, and
5. How do Latino male college students describe and understand academic achievement?

Research Design

Case study methodology was well suited to this study because of its ability to examine a 'case' within its real life context (Yin, 2006). Cassidy and Bates (2005) posit, "The case study paradigm promotes discovery, insight, and interpretation in context, and according to Merriam (1998, 3) [case study] offers a significant contribution to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 73). Thus, this research followed along the tradition of case study, using recursive data analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and artifact analysis to better understand the research topic.

Purposeful sampling techniques were used to identify ten study participants from local higher education institutions in the state of Maryland. Study participants met the criteria for participation and (1) self identified as Latino males; (2) were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old; (3) were enrolled in a postsecondary higher education institution in Maryland; and (4) possessed a 3.0 GPA or higher at the time of selection.

Dilemmas in Educational Research and the Hispanic/Latino U.S. population

Researchers studying Hispanics/Latinos face complex challenges in presenting data on this population coherently to the non-specialist with sufficient detail to express the critical data points of difference. Three primary data points were critical to this study. The first concerned whether participants were U.S. born (2nd generation) or born abroad (immigrant generation). Dropout rates, preschool enrollment, completion rates, and many other educational metrics reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics[3] (NCES) often conflate these numbers resulting in skewed statistical reporting on Latinos

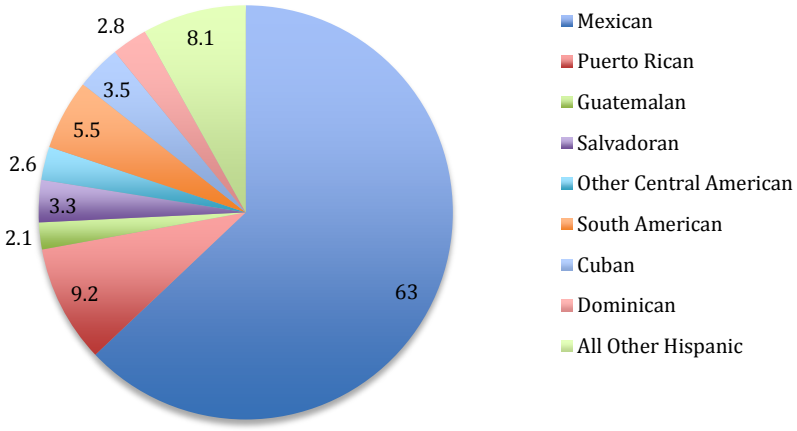
[3] The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. For consistency in report data, NCES will be used, when possible, regarding educational statistics relative to Latino males. US Census information will also be used when appropriate.

and Latino males. The second significant data point concerned Latino subgroup origins. The historical, political, economic, and geographic positioning of the various peoples termed Hispanic/Latino in the U.S. continues to greatly impact schooling indices of achievement. Thus, the largest subgroup, Mexicans, also has the lowest educational completion rates. In comparison, Cuban Americans have educational outcomes on par with White children, a phenomenon tied to Cold War politics (MacDonald, 2004). Yet, Cubans and Mexicans are often conflated in educational statistics when grouped as Hispanics/Latinos. Figure 1.1 provides a graphical representation of the distribution of Latino subgroups by type in the U.S. Third, and specific to males, was the identification and inclusion of Latino male immigrant laborers, ages 16-24, who possessed little education from their home countries, did not enroll in U.S. schools, and intended to return to their home country and not enter the U.S. educational system. Their inclusion skews the number of Latino males not in college (Fry, 2004).

The terms Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably to identify people of Spanish origin or descent. Yet they are not the same term and in certain contexts the use of one or the other can be significant (Zambrana, 2011). Hispanic is a pan ethnic term that was created almost forty years ago by the U.S. Government to categorize people of Spanish speaking descent. Yet those it categorizes have not embraced the pan-ethnic term (Lopez, 2013). According to Zambrana (2011), "the term Latino is a political construct that challenges hegemonic notions of a singular European Spanish ancestry" (p. 1). Thus, the term Hispanic can be used to refer to individuals who identify as natives of Spain, but they would not be considered Latinos. Latinos are not a monolithic or pan-ethnic group. In fact, according to a recent study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, when it comes

to describing their identity, most Hispanics prefer to use their family's country of origin instead of using pan-ethnic identifiers. Thus, it is not uncommon to see references to Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Cuban Americans, Central Americans, South Americans, Dominicans, etc. In this study, I used the terms Latino and Hispanic interchangeably to honor how participants spoke of themselves, and because Hispanic is routinely used in educational statistics and empirical research. Moreover, when referring to gender, I used the terms Latino males, Latinas, and Hispanic or Latinos to refer to broader populations of Americans of Spanish origin or descent.

Figure 1.1. Percent Distribution of the Hispanic Population by Type of Origin: 2010



Notes:
1. The "Other Central American" group includes people who reported "Costa Rican," "Honduran," "Nicaraguan," "Panamanian," Central American Indian groups "Canal Zone," and "Central American."
2. The "South American" group includes people who reported "Argentinean," "Bolivian," "Chilean," "Colombian," "Ecuadorian," "Paraguayan," "Peruvian," "Uruguayan" "Venezuelan," South American Indian groups and "South American."
3. The "All Other Hispanic" group includes people who reported "Spaniard," as well as "Hispanic" or "Latino" and other general terms

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census
http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual approach to Latino male schooling experiences was influenced by several capital theories: social capital, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth. Social capital, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth are all non-financial capital theories that promote social mobility. Applied to education, these capital conceptions can manifest and be transmitted in various ways, one of which is through strong relational ties to individuals who are part of a dominant group. For example, a Spanish speaking student develops a relationship with a peer who is a native English speaker and also fluent in Spanish. By engaging in a relationship with a native English speaker, the Spanish-speaking student develops a form of social capital (and perhaps linguistic capital) that he can leverage to his benefit.

Ethics of care and the importance of considering students cultural, ethnic, social, gendered, racial, economic and historical experiences also undergirded the conceptual model developed for this study. Care in education cannot simply be an approach to the way teachers work with students. As Goldstein (1998) points out, care is more than warm hugs and smiles. Moreover, when students have opportunities to engage in relationships that may be caring with teachers (and other school personnel), literature suggests that students are able to accrue valuable forms of capital that can later be used for social mobility (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1998; Portes, 2000; Dika & Singh, 2002; Horvat et al., 2003).

The ways in which students transition from one community to another may also have an impact on their academic achievement in college. For example, a Latino male

who lives in an urban environment may have to become adept at "code switching" in order to linguistically navigate his school and home communities. Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1993, 1998) developed a model that accounts for the "multiple worlds" students negotiate and transition through. In their model, they developed six patterns of transition typologies that also informed the conceptual model for this study.

Significance of the Study

Noguera & Hurtado (2012) posit, "although there is a growing interest in the status of men in American society…there is a glaring lack of research and scholarly work available on Latino men" (p. 3). The lack of research aimed at Latino males is alarming as they continue to struggle to keep pace with their White, Black, and Asian counterparts and are still overrepresented in the lowest quartiles of many critical educational measures across the educational pipeline (Maxwell, 2012).

Sáenz and Ponjuan (2009) assert that Latino males are "vanishing" from the higher education landscape and the trends become more pronounced in secondary and post-secondary education. In their research, they state that: (1) Latino males are more likely than White and Black Males and Latina females to drop out of high school; (2) Latino males are more likely than White and Black Males and Latinas to join the workforce rather than go to college; (3) proportionally, when compared to White and Black males and Latinas, fewer Latino males overall are enrolling in college; and, (4) if Latino males attend college, they are more likely than White and Black Males and Latinas to leave without finishing. Additionally, the degree attainment gap continues to widen between Latinos and Latinas, and despite these trends, there is little empirical research aimed at examining these issues.

A review of literature uncovers an overwhelming emphasis on the educational experiences of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. Thus, this study offers an important contribution to research on Latino males because it examines the educational experiences of subpopulations of Latinos that are often absent in extant literature. Moreover, this study included participants from Central and South America, specifically El Salvador, Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic as well as Mexico. This is of particular importance because it offers a broader understanding of Latino male educational experiences and reminds us that Latinos are not a monolithic group.

Additionally, all of the participants attended the local community college. This is significant because scholars have noted (Saenz et al, 2013; Vasquez-Urias, 2014) community college as the preferred access point for Latinos and Latino males specifically. However, many Latino males start college and leave without completing a certificate, an Associate's degree, or transferring to a four-year institution. There are several factors that might contribute to Latino male stop-out and dropout rates, many of which may not be related to institutional barriers and systemic issues. Thus, this work does not intend to essentialize Latino experiences within community college settings. However, the participants in this study all experienced academic achievement within and through the community college and their experiences may provide direction for how to better support greater numbers of Latino males to move through the higher education pipeline and attain their post-secondary credentials.

This study provided an asset-based approach to studying the experiences of Latino male college students. Scholars have studied the historical, cultural, social, political, institutional, structural and systemic barriers experienced by these students

(Gándara, 2008; MacDonald, 2004; MacDonald & García, 2003; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Contreras, 2010; Villapando, 2010; Lopez, 2012). Unfortunately, our increased understandings of the barriers impacting Latinos have not yet substantially diminished the continuing gaps in high school completion, college enrollment, and persistence and completions rates for Latino males. Thus, this study is significant because it privileged the voices of Latino male college students to offer an asset-based approach to examining the experiences of Latino male college students. Moreover, one approach to identifying ways to narrow, if not close the gaps, is to engage in qualitative research that aims to illuminate the experiences of the students from their own perspectives and through their own voices (Harper, 2007; Glesne, 2011), which was one of the objectives of this dissertation.

Definition of Terms

Capital Conceptions

In chapter two, I provide extended definitions of the various forms of capital and the patterns of transition that informed the conceptual model developed for this dissertation. However, I briefly noted how I defined various terms here to aid the reader. I drew from scholars who applied theories of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1998; Portes, 2000; Dika & Singh, 2002; Horvat et al., 2003), cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Goldthorpe, 2007; Monkman et al., 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004), and community cultural wealth (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Valdez & Lugg, 2010; Perez Perez Huber, 2009; Burciaga & Erbstein, 2010; Yamamura et al., 2010; Liou et al., 2009) to conceptualize what I called "capital conceptions." Capital conceptions are the multiple forms of capital that individuals have access to through various networks and social

structures that can be used for social mobility. As conceptualized in this study, capital conceptions are forms of capital that may interact independently or cooperatively and may be used consciously or unconsciously within the context of a Latino male's educational experiences. There are several conceptions of capital that are briefly described next, which undergird capital conceptions.

Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso (2005) defines community cultural wealth as "multiple forms of cultural wealth within communities of color…Community cultural wealth is an array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized" (p. 129). Yosso (2005) maintains that communities of color nurture community cultural wealth through six forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. Each is defined below.

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital refers to the ability for individuals from marginalized communities to maintain their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the future despite the real or perceived barriers they encounter in everyday life. Aspirational capital is characterized by a "culture of possibility" (Yosso, 2005, p. 72) that disrupts the cycle "between parents' current occupational status and their children's future academic attainment" (Gándara, 1995, p. 55).

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital refers to the ability to use the intellectual and social skills attained through communication skills in more than one language and/or style (Yosso, 2005). This aspect of community cultural wealth borrows from over three decades of

research on the benefits of bilingual and multilingual skills (Cummins, 1986; Anzaldúa, 1987; Darder, 1991; García & Baker, 1995; Gutiérrez, 2002). Linguistic capital honors students lived experiences and multiple intelligences, which can be acquired in and of out of the classroom.

Familial Capital

Familial capital refers to the wealth that derives from the kinship embedded within families and friendships. According to Yosso (2005) "familial capital is nurtured by our 'extended family'. It may include immediate family (living on long passed-on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends we might consider part of our family" (p. 130-131). Thus, the multiplicity of cultural knowledge and wisdom nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carries a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition are all essential characteristics of familial capital.

Social Capital

Social capital requires greater explication because of its multiple conceptualizations in sociological and educational research. Although the concept of social capital is at least a century old (OECD, 2014), it has received wide attention in the last few decades. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and James Coleman (1988) have been credited with developing two of the most widely used conceptualizations of social capital. However, many scholars have attempted, often incorrectly, to apply the concept to their educational research (Dika & Singh, 2002). Thus, social capital has been criticized as conceptually unclear and murky (Portes, 1998; Dika & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003; Goldthorpe, 2007). This study relies on Yosso's (2005) conceptualization of social capital, which is rooted in the work of

Stanton-Salazar (2001) who draws from Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) assertion that social capital is the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 248). Thus, Social capital can easily be understood as the value of a relationship that provides support and assistance in a given situation (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

Navigational Capital

Navigational Capital refers to the ability of non-majority groups to maneuver and/or negotiate through social institutions and structures that were not created with them in mind (Yosso, 2005). For example, some students are able to successfully navigate through hostile university settings and maintain high levels of achievement. Several scholars write about this in the form of resilience and/or academic invulnerability (Arrellano & Padilla, 1996; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000; Solórzano & Villapando, 1998).

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital refers to those skills and abilities fostered through oppositional behaviors that challenge inequity and inequality (Yosso, 2005; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). According to Yosso (2005), resistant capital highlights the work of Tracy Robinson and Janie Ward (1991), which "examin[ed] a group of African American mothers who were consciously raising their daughters as 'resisters'" (Yosso, 2005, p. 131). Accordingly, these mothers taught their daughters to value their worth and resist constant societal messages that devalued Blackness and belittled Black women. Scholars have acknowledged that resistance takes

many forms (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), but "resistant capital includes cultural knowledge of the structures of racism and motivation to transform such oppressive structures" (Yosso, 2005, p. 81).

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986) posited cultural capital could manifest in three different forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. In the embodied state, cultural capital is accrued overtime through an inculcation of the dominant class' social values, which are traditionally passed on through upbringing and family relations (p. 50). In the objectified state, cultural capital is represented in material objects and media, such as poetry, writings, paintings, sculptures, theater or architecture. In this form, cultural capital can be legally transmitted through ownership, yet ownership only signifies possession of the material object. In order for the object to have true cultural capital value, the owner must also possess the cultural understanding of the object and how/why it has cultural significance to the dominant culture. Finally, institutionalized cultural capital is the third form of capital outlined by Bourdieu (1986). Institutionalized capital can manifest in the form of institutionalized recognition, most often in the form of academic qualifications that can be leveraged for benefit or gain.

Carter (2005) extended Bourdieu's conception to include dominant and non-dominant forms of cultural capital. Dominant cultural capital is those forms of capital outlined by Bourdieu (1986). Conversey, non-dominant forms of capital can be found in marginalized communities and refer to "sets of tastes, appreciations, and understandings such as preferences for particular linguistic, musical and dress styles, and physical gestures used by lower status group members to gain "authentic" cultural status positions

in their respective communities" (p. 50). Thus, Carter's (2005) notion of non-dominant forms of cultural capital will be included as a complement to the study.

Care

In this study, I redefine care by conflating Noddings' (1995, 2005, 2012) ethic of care with notions of critical care (Valenzuela, 1999; Thompson, 1998, 2004; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006) and culturally responsive caring (Gay, 2010). Thus, care should be understood to mean an ethic that includes a *carer* (the person *enacting* care) and the *cared for* (the person *receiving* care) engaging in a mutually agreed upon relationship characterized by caring *for* and *about* the *cared for's* wellbeing and academic success. This type of caring is not colorblind. Furthermore, this care carries with it a mutual responsibility on the part of the *carer* and the *cared for.* The *carer* has an obligation to acknowledge the *cared for's* needs while considering their race, culture, gender, SES, sexual orientation and any other sociocultural factors that might influence their lived experiences. The *cared for* has a responsibility to demonstrate receptivity, recognition, and response.

Critical Transitions

The term "Critical Transitions" derives from connecting care, as defined in this study, with Phelan et al.'s (1998) typology of transition patterns students experience when they negotiate and transition through their "multiple worlds." Thus care is complemented by Phelan et al.'s (1998) patterns of transition, which suggests that the multiplicity of factors and conditions that affect students' transitions from one setting to another, cannot be ignored. Student transitions exist on a continuum and "the patterns…are not necessarily stable for individual students over time but rather can be

affected by external conditions such as classroom or school climate, family circumstances, or changes in peer-group affiliations" (p. 15-16). Thus, as conceptualized in this study, Critical Transitions takes into account both the nature of care, which is inclusive of race, gender, class, and socioeconomic status, and the continuum of transition patterns with which students must routinely negotiate.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I provide a context, grounded in extant literature, for exploring the perceptions of Latino males regarding the factors that contribute to their achievement in college. I explore literature associated with forms of capital with the intention of pushing the boundaries of deterministic theories by incorporating literature framed in theories of resistance and indeterminism, which highlight the agency students have in their educational outcomes. I have organized this chapter into three sections: (1) a review of literature on Latino male educational experiences, social and cultural capital, and community cultural wealth respectively; (2) an overview of the literature undergirding the conceptual framework; and, (3) a description of the conceptual model developed for this study.

Latino Males' Educational Experiences

Research on Latino males is embedded within a larger body of research on educational achievement and Latinos from pre-k to college. Trends in this research during the last two decades reveal persistent gaps in education among Latino boys and girls that begin as early as pre-school and persist throughout the educational pipeline. In comparison to Whites, Latinos are the least educated, although Latinas are performing at higher levels than their male counterparts (NCES, 2012; Saénz & Ponjuan, 2009). Recent interest in Latino educational achievement has grown as is evidenced by the landmark 2010 publication of the *Routledge Handbook of Latinos in Education*; the new social and political work on undocumented DREAMers[4]; and, the most recent Presidential interest

[4] DREAMers are a group of approximately 2 million undocumented youth who live in and have attended schools in the United States that fall under the protection of the

in Latinos and Latino males as noted by various White House reports (An America Built to Last: President Obama's Agenda and the Hispanic Community, 2012; Winning the Future: Improving Education for the Latino Community, 2011) and initiatives (My Brother's Keeper, 2014; White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics). It is important, nonetheless, to understand the macro forces that impact the micro experiences of Latinos in the U.S.

To understand the educational trajectory of Latinos, it is important to understand recent historical developments and how those developments have influenced the experiences of Latinos. There are a number of historical and social developments that have impacted the educational trajectory of Latino males, all of which cannot be covered here. Three historical developments—the feminist movement and the emergence of masculine studies, the criminalization of Latino males, and oppressive immigration policies—however, must be included to create a richer contextual understanding of the challenges facing Latinos, and Latino males especially, as they negotiate the educational pipeline.

Masculinity studies, also known as the study of men, emerged as a contemporary interdisciplinary field of studies in the 1970s as an outgrowth of second wave feminism (Capraro, 2004; Adams & Savran, 2002). Second wave feminism is a feminist movement that emerged in the early 1960's (Whelehan, 1995) and continues to thrive today.

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. Senators Orrin Hatch and Richard Dubin first introduced the DREAM Act in 2001. The DREAM Act is a bipartisan bill that provides undocumented youths who came to the U.S. before the age of sixteen a path toward legalization on the condition that they attend college or serve in the U.S. military for a minimum of two years while maintaining good moral character. Although the DREAM Act continues to be met with opposition that has stymied its enactment as a federal law, many states have passed the DREAM Act, including Maryland (http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/dream-act).

According to Krolokke and Sorensen (2006), second wave feminism denotes the radical women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Historically, the 1960s and 1970s were turbulent times. From the gay rights movement and civil rights to the movements for Chicano rights and Native American rights and anti-Vietnam protests, there was a heightened critique of how oppressed groups were pushed to the margins of U.S. society. Building on this momentum, second wave feminists sought to expand the women's movement to include lesbians and women of color. Adams and Savran (2002) suggest that second wave feminism offered "Both a form of political praxis and a mode of analysis…impell[ing] a new generation of politically engaged critics to study the social oppression of women and their impoverished representation in literature and the arts" (p. 3). Feminist work that followed began the "project of historical recovery" (p. 3) by making the invisible (histories of women, including authors, poets, scholars, artists and political actors) visible. Further, the initial emphasis on studying the plight of wealthy White women was contested and diversified to include poor women, women of color, and subjugated women in colonized and post colonial societies (Ruiz & Dubois, 2007). This work had a significant impact on the scholarly conceptions of masculinity studies, as the primary object of study shifted from women to gender. This was particularly important because gender allowed scholars to expand their scope of study to include masculinity as a social role (like femininity) that required understanding.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the feminist movement also engaged in political and social action to level educational opportunities for women. As noted above, these initial efforts were meant to benefit White women, but women of color were also able to indirectly benefit (Hurtado et al., 2012). Consequently, Latinas were able to make strides

in their educational attainment. The same did not hold true for Latino males, likely because no similar movement emerged for White males from which Latino males could benefit (Hurtado et al., 2012). Despite the emergence of the "men's movement, and its intellectual companion, what later came to be called "men's studies'" (Capraro, 2004, p. 25), which should be understood as a male response to the women's movement and the growing discourse on negative consequences of masculinity, Latino males found only more negative characterizations. For example, Saez, Casado, and Wade (2009) claim that traditional masculinity ideology upholds patriarchal codes through a socialization process that requires men to adopt aggressive behaviors. Consequently, the focus on American masculinity studies uncovers a diversity of research that highlights divergent explanations for negative and positive male behaviors. The paradoxical position men hold complicates identifying explanations for their poor academic outcomes. For Latino males, this is exacerbated by the interactions between race, ethnicity, and masculinity (Liang, Salcedo, & Miller, 2011).

Latino males continue to encounter cultural clashes as they attempt to balance masculinity in the U.S. with their own culture's expectations of manhood (Liang, Salcedo, & Miller, 2011). Moreover, Latino males constantly live in this paradoxical space, engendered with male power while living in oppressed spaces reserved for minorities and minority males. Thus, Latino males engender a paradoxical masculinity, being viewed as the dominant and privileged gender in American society, yet forced to live in oppressed spaces reserved for minorities and minority males, in particular (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Morris, 2011). These competing dual identities certainly impact how Latino males experience education in the U.S.

Latino male educational achievement cannot be analyzed without also considering the impact and influence of the criminal justice system (Pantoja, 2013; Hurtado et al., 2012). Researchers have documented the inordinate incarceration of young black men and the negative impact it has on the Black male community (Alexander, 2012). Similarly, Latino males are beginning to experience patterns of mass incarceration (Pantoja, 2013). According to Hurtado et al. (2012), "Unfortunately, the educational pipeline for young Latinos is closely interconnected to the prison pipeline; this interconnection is essential to understanding the educational trajectory of young Latino men" (p. 103). Furthermore, they note that while educational funding has continued to decline, correctional facilities budgets have continued to expand. Pantoja (2013) argues that the school-to-prison pipeline is directly shaped by the troublesome relationship between education and the criminal justice system. Although the relationship is not explicitly evident, zero tolerance policies, hyper surveillance of minority youth, and disproportionately applied punitive school policies like suspension and expulsion make clear the connections between education and the criminal justice system (Pantoja, 2013; Hurtado et al., 2012; Rios, 2011; Hirschfield, 2008; Cammarota, 2004; Lopez, 2003; Flores-González, 2002).

Although the criminalization of Black and Latino youth is a larger social issue, here I focus specifically on the school environment. According to Hirschfield (2008), in the last few decades, schools have undergone significant shifts in their disciplinary procedures, managing the problem of student discipline through a "prism of crime control" (p. 79). Consequently, minority students, mainly Black and Latino males, are subjected to harsher exclusionary discipline policies (Pantoja, 2013) as well as school

environments where they are heavily scrutinized and placed under constant surveillance (Nolan, 2011; Rios, 2011; Cammarota, 2004).

Beyond being under hyper surveillance in schools, Latino males also experience high rates of incarceration that have socially stigmatizing and structurally marginalizing consequences as well as long term psychological effects (Hurtado et al., 2012; Pantoja, 2013; Haney, 2003; Losen & Skiba, 2010). Haney (2003) noted the negative consequences of incarceration, including dependence on institutional structures, hyper-vigilance and inter-personal distrust and suspicion, emotional overcontrol, alienation, and psychological distancing, social withdrawal and isolation, and a diminished sense of self worth and personal value that Latino males and their families must negotiate without any structural or systemic supports. Given that schools are sites of hyper-surveillance, where Latino male students may not feel valued, trusted, or respected, these experiences will also have real and lasting consequences for their educational trajectories.

Oppressive immigration policies intersect with structural processes that characterize Latino males as criminals. Consider that much of the argument around undocumented Latinos frames them in language that denotes criminalization (i.e., illegal alien, illegal immigrant) (Chavez, 2008; De Genova, 2002; DeSipio & de la Garza, 1998). Further, xenophobic rhetoric can unjustly characterize immigrants as lawbreakers and criminals. Chavez (2008) chronicles how the media at large has created what he calls a "Latino threat narrative" that portrays Latinos as illegitimate members of society who are resistant to full integration in America. These narratives suggest that Latinos are unwilling to learn English or "adopt" an American way of life, unlike previous immigrant groups who eventually assimilated into U.S. culture (Huntington, 2004). What results is a

multifaceted phenomenon that has negative consequences for both documented and undocumented Latinos, stereotyped as one monolithic immigrant population.

Immigration issues have traveled through historical epochs in U.S. history, but the protracted struggles of Latinos currently remain most prevalent. With anti-immigration legislation sweeping across several U.S. states aimed at criminalizing undocumented Latino immigrants in U.S. schools (Oh & Cooc, 2011), it is impossible to deny it's impact on the educational trajectory of Latinos and Latino males. For example, "Alabama's HB 56—the toughest enforcement measure to date—outlaws undocumented immigrants from attending public colleges, and requires K-12 public school teachers to verify their students' legal status and report them to the state education board" (p. 398). These measures move well beyond hyper-surveillance, making teachers immigration monitors and schools unsafe and unwelcoming environments for undocumented students.

The implications of immigration policies are multifaceted and complex, but they have very real and very harmful impacts on children. Many immigrant children now reside in mixed status homes, where one or both parents are undocumented. According to Oh and Cooc (2011), "nearly three fourths [of the more than five million children] who live with undocumented parents are citizens by birth" (p. 399). But, these children undergo environmental stressors and encounter institutional barriers that compromise their quality of life and well being, mostly in their formative years (Passel & Cohn, 2009). In fact, several scholars note the harmful effects of oppressive immigration policies on immigrant children including: a higher likelihood that they will live in poverty than their U.S. counterparts; access to persistently low performing schools because of the impoverished neighborhoods in which they reside; lower access to

publicly funded programs and services such as preschools, healthcare, and continuing education for their parents because of fear of deportation; cultural incongruence that impacts schooling experiences and challenges cultural preservation (Cervantes & Hernandez, 2011; Mather, 2009; Passel, 2011; Yoshikawa, 2011; Oh & Cooc, 2011; Chavez, 2008; De Genova, 2002; DeSipio & de la Garza, 1998). All of these influence the short and long term educational trajectories of Latinos and Latino males.

Presented thus far are only three of many historical developments that have impacted the educational experiences of Latinos in the United States. Latinos, and Latino males in particular, have become the largest minority group in the nation who face unrelenting obstacles as they pursue citizenry, education, and work. As noted in chapter 1, reframing the dominant perceptions of Latinos and Latino males in particular is of critical import to our nation's economic stability. Therefore, it is imperative that we begin to place Latino related issues at the center of our research agendas in order to positively impact policies that can help all Latinos—documented and undocumented—as they strive to become engaged and educated members of U.S. society. In the section that follows, an analysis of the literature on Latino males in education is explored. As a result of the paucity of literature on Latino males in college, literature spanning the K-16 pipeline is examined.

Latino Males in (Higher) Education

Educational research on Latino males is commonly framed in deficit-oriented terms that suggest Latino males are underperformers. A review of extant literature that examines the barriers Latino males encounter on their educational trajectories uncovers three themes. First, various scholars suggest that Latino males are subject to

assimilationist practices that result in subtractive cultural experiences and cultural isolation (Barajas and Pierce, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Second, some argue that Latino males are characterized by stereotypical perceptions of machismo, which frame Latino males as aggressive, hypersexual, chauvinistic, and resistant to authority (Cammarota, 2004; Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Liang et al., 2011; Lopez, 2003; Morris, 2011; Saez et al., 2009; Strayhorn, 2010). These perceptions impact the ways in which they are treated in schools. Thirdly, there is another body of literature that acknowledges the cultural mismatches with which Latino males must negotiate in order to pursue an education (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011; Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Suarez, Fowers, Garwood, & Szapocznik, 1997). This particular body of research acknowledges that the success of students of color often hinges on their ability to successfully traverse two cultural systems—the minority (Latino) culture and the majority society. Literature that cuts across these three general themes are explored on the following pages, but are not presented categorically because of their intersections.

In a study aimed at examining the significance of race and gender among Latinos and Latinas in college, Barajas and Pierce (2001) found that the Latino males in their study took a different gendered pathway to achieve academic success, utilizing athletics and mentoring from White coaches as a vehicle to cope with the systemic and social obstacles they encountered. Consequently, Latino males developed a more individualistic understanding of success perpetuated by the dominant culture and reinforced by their engagement and involvement in sports. Thus, although successful academically, the authors argued that Latino males paid a "psychological price" for their success, developing negative self-evaluations, a weak sense of cultural and racial identity, and

"little social support and shared understanding of being 'different'" (p. 873). The findings suggest some Latino males adopt dominant cultural values in order to achieve academic success.

The work of various scholars (Barajas and Pierce, 2001; Lopez, 2003; Cammarota, 2004) elucidate examples of gendered pathways Latinos pursue to achieve academic success. This body of literature also uncovers a corollary between success and cultural isolation for Latino males, which seems to affirm the research of assimilationist theorists who purport that in order for minorities to be successful, giving up cultural values and group identity is not only inevitable, but also desirable. However, Barajas and Pierce's (2001) research in particular focuses on Latino male athletes, excluding potential explanations for non-athletic Latinos who achieve academic success. Other scholars cite non-cognitive factors (motivation, self-efficacy, social skills) as well as extra-curricular activities, mentoring and social networks as viable explanations for Latino academic achievement (Wawrzynski & Sedlacek, 2003; Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005). Despite the growing interest in gendered pathways Latinos pursue, there is insufficient research to establish clear patterns or trends.

There are several scholars who examine identity construction and its impact on Latino male academic experiences (Cammarota, 2004; Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Liang et al., 2011; Lopez, 2003; Morris, 2011; Saez et al., 2009; Strayhorn, 2010). A common theme threads through this body of literature—Latino males and females construct different gendered pathways as they navigate schooling. Thus, although there are evidences of different pathways Latinos and Latinas pursue, more research is needed in

this area (Zambrana & MacDonald, 2009). Understanding these different constructions may help educators to better support Latinos, and Latino males in particular, along the educational pipeline.

Culture notwithstanding, gender and how it impacts teaching and learning is a critical educational issue. Sadker & Sadker (1994) argues that boys and girls may sit in the same classroom, with the same teacher, use the same textbooks, and receive the same curricular material, and still receive very different educations. Scholars attribute these differences to the way boys and girls are socialized both in the home and in school (Lopez, 2003; Cammarota, 2004). Lopez (2003) argues, "Race and gender not only are categories of identity, but also embody social relations, social organizations, and lived experience" (p. 5). Lopez (2003) proposes a race-gender experience framework for examining the race and gender disparities in education. At the heart of her theory is the notion that in order to understand the race-gender gap in education, one must first understand how students become racialized and gendered in daily life and in school.

According to Lopez (2003), race-gendered experiences are central to how men and women view education in their lives. When men and women experience race(ing) and gender(ing), the experiences accumulate over time and form "race-gender outlooks," which are "life perspectives about how social mobility is attained" (p. 5). Furthermore, because men and women from the same ethnic and class backgrounds have different race-gender experiences they come to view the role of education in their lives in vastly different ways. This threads nicely with the work of Barajas and Pierce (2001), who also find that men and women view education differently based on their race and gender experiences. Unlike Barajas and Pierce (2001), Lopez expounds on racialization and

genderization, and suggests it is the genesis of the differences between male and female academic experiences, rebuffing the assertion that males and females are simply inherently different.

Like other scholars, Lopez (2003) finds that Dominican families (as well as other Caribbean families in her study) perpetuate different gender roles for males and females (Cammarota, 2004; Morris, 2011). There is far more social control over daughters, while there is a much more relaxed control over sons. Thus, literature uncovers that Latino men are given much more freedom in their adolescent years than are their female counterparts (Lopez, 2003; Cammorata, 2004; Morris 2011), resulting in the streets becoming a space where they spend much of their free time (Lopez, 2003). Thus, Latino "men were absolved from the adult responsibilities imposed on their female counterparts" (p. 131). This is significant because it offers an explanation for how youth from the same neighborhood, even family, can have divergent academic and economic trajectories. For example, a brother and sister from the same household will have different experiences based on their gender. As such, scholars like Lopez (2003) and Cammarota (2001) expose a contradiction in the way some Latino families socialize and treat males and females, with males usually being privileged in status and treatment. Scholars suggest, however, this different treatment has a harmful impact on Latino male academic outcomes, as males may miss out on certain social benefits as well as opportunities to develop social capital.

As noted earlier, the criminalization of Latino males in schools is well documented (Pantoja, 2013; Rios, 2011; Cammarota, 2004; Lopez, 2003) and scholars connect this phenomenon to Latino male school leaving. Lopez (2003) argues, "The

criminalization of low-income youth from racially stigmatized communities has become a 'normal' occurrence" (p. 77). The literature makes clear that policing of Latino males is pervasive; many people, besides police, are involved in policing Latino males, including retail store workers, private security guards, every day citizens, and even schools (Cammarota, 2004; Lopez, 2003; Rios, 2011; Pantoja, 2013). In response to constantly being policed, many Latino males accept policing as an everyday part of life as a means of coping. This is particularly alarming because schools are often thought to be "safe space[s]" (Rom, 1998) for students, but for Latino males "school…[is]…not a refuge from the larger societal policing of Latinos" (Cammarota, p. 67).

Thus, according to Cammarota being under constant surveillance resulted in many Latino males skipping school. Cammarota (2004) articulates this well, suggesting that students resist by escaping school. He posits, "For many males in this study, cutting was a practice that allowed peers to interact, as well as evade the surveillance of school staff…Cutting was therefore something Latinos did together as friends" (p. 68). Cammarota (2004) further uncovered that Latino males did not find cutting enjoyable. Rather, they understood it was a negative activity that came at a cost, but they yearned for positive social interactions that they could not experience in school.

Those Latino males able to resist being criminalized were able to do so because of positive relationships with adults imbued with social capital. Therefore, there is an overlap between this body of literature and research on social capital as well as literature that examines care (Noddings, 2005, 2012; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999) that posits when students are able to establish caring relationships with school personnel and/or mentors, they develop social capital that can

be leveraged for academic success (Gonzalez, 2013; Deo & Griffin, 2011; Strayhorn, 2010; Monkman et al., 2005; Saunders & Serna, 2004; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). It appears that when students are able to develop caring relationships, they have the opportunity to form an academic identity that extends beyond the pressures of assumed academic deficiency and criminalization.

Prominent in the literature are the ways in which schools and the larger society characterize and mistreat Latino males (Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Lopez, 2003; Cammarota, 2004; Rios, 2011; Pantoja, 2013). Yet, scholars acknowledge that Latino men also have the agency and intellect to reject societal mistreatments in pursuit of different experiences. Barajas and Pierce (2001), Lopez (2003), Cammarota (2004), Strayhorn (2010), Irizarry (2011a), Gonzalez (2013), and others demonstrate that this is, in fact, possible. While Latino males are subject to deleterious and harmful societal and institutionally sanctioned and/or perpetuated oppressive forces, they do not have to respond as passive victims. Instead, they can and do, in some instances, pursue different pathways that embrace education as a tool for social mobility.

Some scholars (Liou et al., 2010; Flores-González, 2002) argue for school reform that can support Latinos generally and Latino males specifically. Schools can help by reinforcing positive relationships with adults who can do what Flores-González (2002) suggests by fostering student identity development while helping to consolidate a student identity beyond high school. In her work, Flores-González (2002) adopts role identity theory to explicate how youth choose either a "school kid" or "street kid" identity. In an effort to move beyond resistance theories (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001), which emphasize consequences for students who develop oppositional behaviors toward schools, she

attempts to explain why some Puerto Rican students adopt "school kid" identities and others do not. She suggests that to build and maintain a school kid identity, students who remain in school experience three stages: (1) "learning the student role" (Flores-González, 2002, p. 32), (2) "reinforcing student identity" (p. 97), and (3) "consolidating the student identity" (p. 106). All of the stages can be reinforced at home and in school. Thus, schools can and do play a pivotal role in the development of "school kid" identities, and can play a key role in preventing the development of street kid identities, too.

Flores-González (2002) argues that, Puerto Rican students developed "school kid" identities when they received social support, recognition, and rewards, developed caring relationships with teachers, found different opportunities for social and academic achievement, and were able to do so in and through school. For most school kids elementary school was a safe space, where they experienced protection from frightening and dangerous experiences like being victimized, fighting, and/or being bullied. But, most important in the elementary years is the connection students make with teachers and other school based professionals. Thus, Flores-González's research also aligns with social capital research that posits students' relationships with school agents provides for greater opportunities for favorable academic outcomes.

Flores-González (2002) finds, as is evidenced in the literature, that after-school/extracurricular activities play a critical role in developing a "school kid" identity. Unfortunately, she also discovers that there are many informal and hidden institutional barriers that prevent students from participating in extracurricular activities. For example, an afterschool basketball team may have a limited number of slots available on the team

or an afterschool computer lab may have a limited number of computers available for student use. As a result, there are limited opportunities for large numbers of students to take advantage of these offerings.

Flores-González's (2002) study concludes with a call for schools to assume greater responsibility for creating more school kids. She advocates for schools that are responsive to student's needs and respectful of the cultural and ethnic diversity of students, which should be evidenced in the curriculum as well as in multicultural celebrations. Furthermore, she believes schools should do more to foster meaningful relationships with students, teachers, and other school personnel. In this way, schools can help students develop social/cultural capital as well as future identities that are aspirant and realistic.

In sum, extant literature suggests that the life experiences of Latino men and women, which are colorized through the ways in which they are socialized because of their race and gender, has a cumulative effect on the ways in which they view and are viewed in schools (as well as other social spheres). For men, in particular, this suggests that they do not openly rebuff education as a tool for upward mobility. Rather, they are acting in response to their mistreatment in and by society, which lies at the root of their educational problems (Cammarota, 2004; Morris, 2011).

A collection of independent studies and articles also suggest schools can help family and community members assume a greater role in the education of Latino youth (Huerta & Brittain, 2010; Rodriguez-Brown, 2010; Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, & Lopez, 1998; Flores-González, 2002; Noddings, 2005; Ojeda, Navarro, & Morales, 2011; Torrez, 2004; Lopez, 2003; Dance, 2002). Schools can do this by fostering greater opportunities

for family and community engagement. In this way, schools can expand the scope of adults in Latino's lives who can help "bolster transformational resistances and self determination through academic achievement" (Flores-González, 2002, p. 71). Moreover, schools can help by encouraging students to address oppressive forces that impede their success outside the school walls. In this way, schools can operate as centers for change, teaching students resistance strategies that are grounded in educative frameworks (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Flores-González, 2002; Cammarota, 2004; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006). For example, schools can help Latino male students develop responses to the ongoing policing and criminalization that they experience both within schools and in the larger society that allow students to remain engaged in the school system. Of course, this would require schools to acknowledge their own oppressive practices and work to remedy them in an attempt to reengage Latino males.

Examining Latino male gender construction is of particular import to educational experiences. *Machismo*, which is commonly used to describe negative attributes, such as sexism, chauvinism, and hypermasculinity, is a word that is often used to describe Latino men. According to Arciniega, Anderson, Tova-Blank and Tracey (2008), "Although *machismo* is a term that has been bandied about in popular culture and has been the subject of many academic and literary articles, it has continued to defy a clear definitional description" (p. 19). Furthermore, in their study involving Mexican American males, the authors found the positive aspects of Latino male behavior are usually neglected, creating a distorted perception of Latino male behavior. These distorted perceptions contribute to Latino male oppression and impact how they are viewed in classrooms, on college campuses, and in the larger society. Furthermore, Liang, Salcedo,

& Miller (2011) suggest that Latino constructions of masculinity are complex and that using machismo as a synonymous descriptor of Latino masculinity encompasses racist undertones. They assert, "knowledge of Latino masculinity has been limited by years of reinforcement of a narrow perspective of stereotyped negative behaviors" (p. 202). They argue for a broader conceptualization of Latino masculinity that respects the importance the Latino culture places on males adhering to values that include honor, respect, dignity, and family.

Liang et al. (2011) were not the first to advocate for a broader conceptualization of Latino masculinity. In fact, their study utilized a Latino masculinity scale developed by Arciniega, et al., (2008). Arciniega et al. found that most conceptions of Latino male behaviors were restrictive and grounded in a limited *machismo* framework that did not fully capture Latino masculinity. Consequently, the authors developed a scale to measure both *machismo* and *caballerismo*. Arciniega et al. offer this explanation of caballerismo:

> *Caballerismo* refers to a code of masculine chivalry, and English term that also stems from the original Latin root *caballus*. Like the English chivalric code, *caballerismo* developed out of a medieval sociohistorical class system in which people of wealth and status owned horses for transportation and other forms of horsepower. Thus, *caballero* referred to a land-owning Spanish gentleman of high station who was master of estates and/or ranches (i.e., haciendas)…Over time and centuries of usage on both sides of the Atlantic, *caballero* evolved to signify a Spanish gentleman with proper, respectful manners, living by an ethical code of chivalry. (p. 20).

Thus, *caballerismo* is rooted in a historical context and offered in contrast to *machismo*

as a counter explanation of positive Latino masculine behaviors.

To test their scale, Ariciniega et al., (2008) conducted two independent studies of Mexican-American men. The studies resulted in a more comprehensive measure of *machismo*, integrating both positive and negative male attributes. Through factor analyses of their studies, the authors labeled two independent dimensions of machismo, traditional *machismo* and *Caballerismo*. They describe traditional *machismo* "as aggressive, sexist, chauvinistic, and hypermasculine" and *caballerismo* "as nurturing, family centered, and chivalrous" (p. 29).

Their findings were revelatory; traditional *machismo* is independent of *caballerismo*, yet it is still possible for a Latino male to score high on *caballerismo* while possessing many traditional *machismo* characteristics. The opposite is also true – those respondents who scored high on traditional *machismo* may still demonstrate behaviors reflective of *caballerismo*. It appears that Latino masculinity is not a static construct, but one that is fluid—it is possible for a Latino male to embody both traditional *machismo* and *caballerismo* to varying degrees at different times.

The works of these scholars (Arciniega et al., 2008; Saez et al., 2009; Liang et al., 2011) offer a rich explanation of how Latino males construct their gender identity through masculinity ideology. The significance of their work should not be underestimated. Although *machismo* ideology continues to pervade as the predominant explanation for Latino masculine behaviors, the results of these scholars' works provide a positive counter explanation that should receive wider attention. Wider understandings of both *machismo* and caballerismo may help uncover potential solutions for addressing the achievement gap experienced by Latino males.

The influence of *machismo* is also evident in the sparse literature that examines Latino male college experiences. Harris and Harper (2008) presented a study that profiled four racially diverse men enrolled in community colleges: (1) the working White mechanic, (2) the struggling Asian help seeker, (3) the closeted Black gay achiever, and (4) Latino homeboy. Erik, the Latino homeboy, is germane to this research. Harris and Harper (2008) highlighted the role that Erik's network of friends played in his social and academic experiences. Erik reportedly always enjoyed school. However, when he started high school, he associated with a group of friends that negatively influenced him. As a result, he started cutting classes, pursuing sex with girls, and participating in minor illegal activities. Although he continued to attend high school and successfully graduated, he did not attend graduation for fear of his friends finding out and negatively reacting. Shortly after, Erik's father became terminally ill. According to Harris and Harper (2008), Erik realized that in his father's absence he would need to "care for his mother and two younger sisters…[and] decided to enroll in community college to pursue a vocational certificate and an associate's degree" (p. 32). When his friends found out he had enrolled in community college, they ridiculed him saying, "School is for girls and sissies. If you need to support your family, be a man and go out and get a real job" (p. 32). As a result of Erik needing to support his family, he chose to pursue a pathway through college, which his friends suggested was for "girls and sissies." Thus, Erik experienced a gender role conflict that was similar to the other three racially different men presented by Harris and Harper (2008). Erik's story is of importance because, although not explicitly articulated by Harris and Harper (2008), it also demonstrates the gendered cultural expectations placed upon Latino males (*familismo & machismo)* to be

the providers of the family. These cultural expectations have been linked to low rates of persistence and completion for Latino male students enrolled in college (López Turley, 2005; Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda, & Yoshikawa, 2012; Martinez, 2013).

In a separate study, Harris (2010) examined the contextual influences of college men's of masculinities among 68 male students at a private research university. Using grounded theory, he uncovered that five subthemes characterized the way participants conceptualized masculinities: (1) being respected, (2) being comfortable and secure in one's self, (3) assuming responsibility and leadership, (4) displaying physical prowess, and (5) appealing to women. He also found that fathers had a significant impact on the socialization and behaviors of the male participants in his study as well as peers and institutional norms. While Harris' (2010) study has implications for research focused on gender identity, it also helps educators understand how masculinity identities are formed by different factors.

Significantly, emerging literature, which examines Latino male collegiate experiences, posits that Latino males refrain from soliciting help because of *machismo* attitudes (Sáenz et al., 2013; Sanchez, Olivarez, & DaSilva, 2013). In a recent study Sáenz et al. (2013) explored the role of masculinity on Latino male community college students. Through 23 focus groups conducted over the course of two years with 130 Latino men attending seven community colleges across the state of Texas, the researchers sought to examine how masculinity constructs identified through the Male Gender Role Conflict (MGRC) framework developed by O'Neil (1981) influenced the educational experiences of Latino males enrolled in community college. Their findings revealed three significant behavioral patterns associated with MGRC: restrictive emotionality;

focus on control, power, and competition; and obsession with achievement and success. Sáenz et al. (2013) found that the Latino males in their study did not engage in help seeking behaviors because of *machismo* or more specifically their concerns with how they would be viewed by others, i.e., weak, feminine, and soft. Interestingly, according to Sáenz et al. (2013), "*Machismo* did not fit neatly into the MGRC constructs, perhaps due to its inclusion of cultural norms" (p. 89). This was due, at least in part, to the contradictory notions of *machismo.* On the one hand, *machismo* was identified as a source of strength that motivated Latino males to work harder. On the other, it was "a barrier to their academic success as it often prevented Latino males from standing up for themselves and seeking help when it was most needed" (p. 89). These findings are significant and align with aforementioned research that calls for broader conceptualizations of Latino masculinity. Moreover, it uncovers a need to better understand how Latino males in higher education settings successfully navigate institutional structures to achieve academic success.

Up to this point, literature that examines the educational experiences and gender constructions of Latino males has been presented to contextualize the need for additional research on their college experiences. In much of the literature, various forms of capital and cultural wealth emerge as resources Latino males already leverage or may leverage to achieve academic success. Thus, within higher educational literature, capital theories have been used as theoretical frames to examine various educational interests, including student academic preparation, college access, college persistence, college major selection, transfer, and success (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Dumais, 2002; Horvat, Weinenger, & Lareau, 2002; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003; Longden, 2004;

Ream 2005; Monkman et al., 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004; Dumais & Ward, 2009; Nunez, 2009a, 2009b). In the following sections, literature on social capital, cultural capital, and cultural wealth (including community cultural wealth) are reviewed to examine how these theories have been applied to educational research that examines Latino males.

Social and Cultural Capital

The growing body of literature on social and cultural capital and its relationship to education tells a very complex story. Assuming social capital is the main character in the story, there are several supporting roles including education, cultural and intercultural capital, race, ethnicity, and class. Each has a compelling connection to social capital, with several overlapping across various pieces of literature. As a result, where possible, literature is presented both chronologically, because it is important to understand how themes emerged over time, and dialogically, as a means of understanding how the literature intersects and interacts.

Stanton-Salazar's (1997) work attempts to develop a network-analytic frame, which builds from Bourdieu (1986), among others, to examine the schooling and socialization experiences of working class minority youth (p. 1). He purports that many scholars have been working to develop new conceptual models for understanding the socialization of minority youth, "particularly African American and Latino youth, from economically disenfranchised urban communities" (p. 1). The strength of his network-analytic approach, he believes, "lies in its comparative analysis of race and class" (p. 16). This network analytic approach emphasizes examining the systems responsible for such things as minority school failure. It attempts to do this by exposing the mechanisms by

which the prevailing social group organizes, in the most tacit of ways, to monopolize institutional resources (p. 16). This process is of the utmost significance because notions of socialization often govern how the persistent problems experienced by minority students are addressed in school systems. Stanton-Salazar (1997) is concerned with the role institutional agents play in the greater multicultural environment in which youth must negotiate.

In addition, Stanton-Salazar (1997) squarely addresses low-status minority student experiences that are problematized by social antagonisms and divisions that impede minority student access to social capital that is developed through institutional relationships taken for granted by middle class families (p. 2). He maintains that the accumulation of social capital is problematic for low status children for the following five overlapping reasons:

1. Differential value accorded children and youth in contemporary society, depending upon their social class, ethnicity, and gender;
2. The barriers and entrapments that make participation in mainstream settings a terribly uncomfortable experience for minority children and youths;
3. Evaluation and recruitment processes by which school-based agents evaluate and select minority students for sponsorship; such selection processes largely entail perceptions of the student's ability and willingness to adopt the cultural capital and standards of the dominant group;
4. What [he terms] the institutionalization of distrust and detachment, or the institutional engineering of conditions and prescribed roles that are antithetical to the development of social capital;

5. The ideological mechanisms that hinder help-seeking and help-giving behaviors within the school.

(Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 4)

According to Stanton-Salazar (1997), these issues are not coincidental; rather they are intrinsic operations of mainstream institutions that function to erect barriers for social development of working class minority youth, resulting in their school failure. Stanton-Salazar's (1997) work highlights that social capital has both positive and negative influences on Latino student access to educational opportunities, which, in turn, impacts their attainment and achievement of academic successes.

Saunders & Serna (2004) cite Stanton-Salazar (1997) as a means of supporting their contention that first-generation college students, lacking funds of social capital, benefit from the development of relationships with caring educated adults (p. 148). Their article situates the experiences of first-generation college students within social/cultural capital theory, social reproduction theory, and critical theory (p. 147); however for this literature review, I narrow in on the relevant social and cultural capital connections offered by Saunders & Serna (2004). The authors investigate the effects of the Futures Project, a college access/intervention program, on a group of first-generation Latino college students and how their involvement in the program influenced their transition from high school to college, their ability to access academic and social supports while in college and sustain a college going identity (p. 147).

Furthermore, Saunders & Serna (2004) apply Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of social capital to their investigation. As such, they examine the social relationships, resources, and information critical for college preparation developed

through student engagement in the Futures Project. Participants of the Futures Project took part in a variety of activities designed to build upon their social capital, such as mentoring, counseling, academic tutoring, parent information sessions, assistance with college applications, and financial aid (p. 148). Through their engagement with the Futures Project, students became involved in academically rigorous research seminars that introduced them to the field of sociology of education. These research seminars provided students with access to peer advising, peer research interest groups, skill building workshops, and research presentations, allowing them to develop an elaborate support system. Consequently, students were able to build a network of resources and essentially make deposits into the growing "bank" of capital they were developing (p. 149).

It is important to note that student involvement in complex research activities exposes them to the challenges minority students encounter when attempting access to higher education institutions. These types of activities avail students of an important opportunity to "understand and internalize the social situation of minorities in the United States and successfully resist the internalization of negative portrayals that are often assigned to their ethnic/racial group" (Saunders & Serna, 2004, p. 149). Furthermore, the practice of engaging students in research and support groups recalls Stanton-Salazar (1997), who asserted that these types of relationships, and the networks that entwine them into units, could be viewed as social capital. When minority students are given an opportunity to examine and internalize institutional factors that contribute to their inability to achieve success in educational settings, they interrupt the process of social reproduction (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Monkman et al., 2005).

Where Saunders & Serna (2004) begin to intersect with other literature is in their discovery that not all Latino students demonstrate the same facility in developing, accessing, and applying the forms of capital they have acquired (p. 160). Several scholars discuss how Latinos attain various forms of social capital and apply them in different ways (Ream, 2003, 2005; Ceja, 2004; Ream & Stanton-Salazar, 2006; Nunez, 2009a, 2009b). Ream's (2003) work, which focuses on how mobility impacts Mexican-American student achievement rates, suggests that students are the ignorant recipients of "counterfeit" forms of social capital that impinge upon their school success (p. 238). He draws upon Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch (1995), who contend that Mexican-American students experience language and cultural barriers that impede "help-seeking behaviors," resulting in limited access to school personnel who possess valuable information about academic supports and resources (p. 238). Ream (2003) suggests that this phenomenon impacts Mexican-American student performance and achievement rates. He posits that Stanton-Salazar's (1997) work, which draws attention to how minority students form social ties differently than their mainstream counterparts, consequently inhibiting the accrual and transference of resources rooted within social networks, offers new opportunities for researching Mexican-American underachievement from a social capital framework (p. 238).

Ream (2003) links social capital with student mobility as a means of developing a social capital/mobility dynamic that he grounds in the conceptualizations of both Coleman and Bourdieu. Apparently, Coleman (1988, 1990) suggested that mobility "reflects social de-capitalization," and Ream (2003) endeavors to take the suggestion one step further by adding the term *dynamic*, which he maintains seeks to examine the

achievement gap between Mexican-American and non Latino White adolescents. His research investigates "two *school* social capital composites reflecting (a*) academically relevant teacher/student interaction,* and (b) *school-initiated interaction with students' parents*" (p. 239). He puts forward the argument that student mobility interrupts social capital development in such a way that it impacts Mexican American achievement rates, resulting in underachievement (p. 239). Ream's (2003) work is important because it presents a counter narrative of student underachievement that is situated in an extension of the social capital conceptualization. His later research, however, does expand beyond this point, leaving room for future research in this area.

Monkman, Ronald, and Théramène (2005) pay close attention to the ways social reproduction can be "derailed" through the dynamics of negotiating social and cultural capital. They believe that the concepts of social and cultural capital elucidate how inequality is replicated and perpetuated in schools (p. 4). Integral to their work is the notion that social and cultural capital, in addition to other forms of capital, including but not limited to economic, physical, and technological, function in schools and other settings to mediate the social reproduction of inequality. They maintain that the different forms of capital tend to mirror and reproduce stratification patterns in a class-based society like the United States. Consequently, these factors contribute to allowing the dominant social group to continue developing forms of capital that are not accessible to the non-dominant social groups (p. 7).

Monkman et al. (2005) find three basic functions of social capital evidenced in the literature: "(a) as a source of social control; (b) as a source of family support; (c) as a source of benefits through extrafamilial networks" (p. 8). Further, they posit that social

capital develops both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal ties relate to members of the same class or group, and tend to be stronger because group members share similar experiences. Conversely, vertical ties denote individuals who develop ties to members outside of their group, who can serve as a source of capital, offering the individual benefits they would not otherwise be privy to within their typical social group. This relationship is generally weaker, because while the individuals develop social ties, they have little in common from which to continue building their connections (p. 9). Parent-teacher relationships are an example of weak vertical ties.

Important in Monkman et al.'s (2005) research is the assertion that schools are important builders or destroyers of social capital (p.9). They maintain that schools, which are rich in weak ties, establish links with their broader communities that support the development of social capital. Thus social capital is transmitted to group members who understand how to negotiate and navigate educational institutions, behaviors typical of the dominant community group (p. 9). Simply stated, when non dominant groups, such as immigrant families are unfamiliar with how to communicate with school officials, and are unclear about acceptable norms and behaviors, or lack the ability to develop social networks that can translate expectations, social capital diminishes. Consequently, non dominant group members who do not understand or share the same sets of norms as the dominant group will unwittingly disregard or violate educational policies, resulting in consequences that further diminish their access to sources of social capital and cultural capital (p. 10). Monkman et al. emphasize the importance of schools as critical vertical links, where children and their parents are engaged in continual contact with other social classes and social networks (p. 28).

Monkman et al. (2005) demonstrate how social and cultural capitals interact. Drawing on Granovetter's (1985) notion of embeddedness, they posit, "Cultural resources, activated and transformed into cultural capital, are transmitted via social networks when social capital is activated" (p. 26). Thus, cultural capital can be viewed as the key ingredient embedded in the transmission of social ties that are enacted as social capital. Consider a classroom where the teacher and students first initiate a relationship. At the outset, the student/teacher relationship is a weak vertical tie, but as the year progresses and the student/teacher relationship strengthens, so too, does the cultural and social capital embedded in their relationships.

The literature, up to now, has provided evidence that social and cultural capital has both a positive and negative bearing on Latino educational experiences. A review of the literature elucidates two disparate research directions, one emphasizing students as the central agenda, the other examining parental and familial networks. Stanton-Salazar (1997) and Saunders & Serna (2004), for example, place students at the center of their work; whereas, Horvat et al. (2003), Perna & Titus (2005), and Ceja (2004), focus on parental networks as the thrust of their research. This is of particular importance because it offers different narratives about how social and cultural capital influence Latino student access, attainment, and achievement. Equally important is the varying methods researchers employed to evaluate their findings. While most relied on quantitative methods, scholars like Horvat et al. (2003), Ceja (2004), and Saunders & Serna (2004) took a qualitative approach to their work. This is also worthy of highlighting because examining different methodologies allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the issues impacting Latinos in educational settings beyond numbers and conjecture.

A return to the literature offers insights from Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak and Terenzini (2004), who like Saunders & Serna (2004), place first-generation college students center stage in their work. They define first-generation college students as those whose parents did not complete schooling beyond high school (Pascarella et al., p. 275). Accordingly, Pascarella et al. (2004) reference Bourdieu's (1986) and Coleman's (1988) social capital conceptualizations, asserting that in addition to the cultural and social capital students transport to their college going experiences, the college going experience itself provides additional opportunities for students to develop social capital. Explicitly stated in the literature of Saunders & Serna (2004) and Pascarella et al. (2004) is the contention that first-generation college students enter college with a noticeable deficit in social capital. Research, however, suggests that the college going experience functions in a compensatory manner that helps to ameliorate this deficit (Pascarella et al., p. 252), thus, contradicting Bourdieu's position on the role educational institutions play in capital accumulation.

Pascarella et al. (2004) juxtapose first-generation college students with two other groups: students whose parents had both completed a bachelor's degree or higher; and students with no more than one parent who had completed a bachelor's degree or above. Based on their findings, first-generation college students accrue social capital by simply attending college. However, the authors' findings unveil the persistent impact of disparate levels of capital on first-generation college students when compared to their college going counterparts. Additionally, their findings make clear the inherent value of parental post secondary education, which could help to explain why much of the research

on social capital focuses on parental networks and influences on students' college going experiences (p. 275).

Nunez's (2009a) work purports that Latinos are the largest minority group in the country, yet they rank among the "lowest educational attainment and college completion rates of students of color" (p. 22). Her work seeks to understand this conundrum by examining Latino students' college experiences. She pays explicit attention to both social and intercultural capital, and how Latino students access these in attempts to mitigate marginalizing experiences in order to advance educational attainment (p.22). Nunez (2009a) cites research that explains how marginalizing experiences impede Latino students' social adjustment outcomes, which contributes to their lower rates of persistence and completion.

Nunez (2009a) offers the following important summative information on Latinos in education:

1. Students are more likely to complete bachelor's degrees if they enroll in four year institutions, yet Latino students are overrepresented in community colleges, while less than half (about 44%) are enrolled in the four year sector.
2. Among Latinos enrolled in the four-year sector, the majority (about seven in ten) attend public institutions.
3. Many Latino students who make it to four-year universities have been high achieving K-12 students, yet even highly achieving Latino students encounter critical academic, cultural, and financial barriers to preparing for and succeeding in college.

4. Limited research exists on the early transition experiences of Latino students in four-year institutions.

(p. 23)

These points deserve attention because they highlight the need for more research on Latinos in higher education settings. Beyond the implications amassed here, Nunez (2009a) extends the work of Pascarella et al. (2004) and Saunders & Serna (2004), examining second year Latino student experiences. Included in her research are first, second, and third-generation Latino students.

Nunez's (2009a) use of the sense of belonging construct is a departure from the conceptions of social and cultural capital presented thus far. The results of her study tap into social capital from a frame that departs from Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988). She maintains, for example that "a sense of belonging represents a form of social capital in that it reflects students' feelings about their connection with the university and the quality of social ties within that community" (p. 38). Yet, a sense of belonging was initially developed as a construct to "measure a felt sense of social cohesion within a university, city, or country" (p. 24). She chooses to do this because of the work of Hurtado and Carter (1997), who applied this construct to their study, which examined influences on Latino students' transitions to four-year colleges (Nunez, 2009a).

Even though the literature has applied social and cultural capital theories to examine race and ethnicity, it fails to acknowledge that the two theories emerged from a homogenous lens to examine class structures without considering race and ethnicity. This hearkens back to several scholars (Musoba and Baez, 2009; Goldthorpe, 2007; Yosso, 2005; Coradini, 2010; Lareau & Weinenger, 2003) who criticize the application of social

and cultural capital, arguing, to varying degrees, that researchers misuse the theories in their studies. Thus, cultural and social capital have heuristic value, but educational research involving communities of color would benefit from the inclusion of alternative conceptualizations of capital that honor the lived experiences and cultural wealth of the communities to which they refer. Accordingly, I argue for a more comprehensive and inclusive framework that acknowledges the heuristic value of social and cultural capital but also considers how race, ethnicity, gender, and culture impact Latino male college experiences. The work of scholars interested in validating and valuing the rich cultural knowledge present in communities of color are thus presented to augment social and cultural capital.

Community Cultural Wealth

Several scholars examine how Latinas might be able to translate cultural wealth into social capital to improve their academic success (Zambrana and Zoppi, 2002; Liou et al., 2009; Perez Huber, 2009; Burciaga & Erbstein, 2010, 2012). They argue that the challenges Latino families face are not directly associated with Latino cultural assets because the cultural capital inhered in Latino families has not been easily converted into social capital in the United States. Defining cultural wealth as a "set of values and norms that guide behavior," Zambrana and Zoppi (2002) draw on resilience literature, which offers three domains associated with people who are resilient: "internal resources, family climate, and social environment" (p. 45). They argue that Latino families possess cultural assets that are consistent with resilient characteristics, including:

> Having religious faith, emphasizing a collective orientation, valuing children and engaging in multiple effective gestures from early on, teaching children values

> which include responsibility to others, collective responsibility, respecting elders and authority figures, and sibling responsibility, and valuing civility such as the expression of politeness and helpful behaviors (p. 45).

Unfortunately, many of these cultural assets are taught at home but not reinforced and/or valued in schools. Consequently, when Latinos do not see these values reinforced in schools they experience cultural incongruence that can lead to many challenges both at home and in school (Zambrana and Zoppi, 2002; Perez Huber, 2009).

Drawing on Portes' (2000) explanation of social capital, Zambrana and Zoppi (2002) attribute Latino student underachievement to the discordant values transmitted in U.S. schools and in Latino families. They argue that culture is central to Latino self worth, but in U.S. schools little attention is paid to differences with Latino students constantly being confronted with U.S. values of independence, assertiveness, and competitiveness, all of which directly conflict with Latino cultural values. I would liken these explicit and implicit conflicting cultural messages to Smith's (2008) notion of racial battle fatigue, which is a theory attributed to the psychological erosion experienced by communities of color who constantly confront racial microagressions and racialized aggressions.

According to Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano (2011), racial battle fatigue can be understood as the exhaustion that results from people of color constantly having to manage the barrage of "subtle, stunning, cumulative, verbal and non verbal insults layered with racism, sexism, elitism and other forms of subordination" (p. 212). Everyday, people of color are forced to interpret subtle microagressions, decode how those microagressions are layered with discrimination and determine if and how to

respond. Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano (2011) compare the constant daily stress experienced from racial battle fatigue with the stress experienced by soldiers when in battle. In a similar vein, Latinos must constantly deal with cultural attacks and culturally subtractive schooling experiences (Valenzuela, 1999) that manifest both subtly and overtly at the micro and macro level. Like racial battle fatigue, the micro- and macro-aggressions levied at Latino students is often cunning, cumulative, verbal and nonverbal, but with respect to Latinos the aggressions are also layered with nativist and monolinguistic forms of subordination. Therefore, several scholars argue that in low-income Latino communities these incessant cultural conflicts hinder Latino student learning and achievement (Trueba, 1999; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002; Yamamura et al., 2010).

To increase Latino student achievement, literature suggests schools must develop tools and strategies to translate the cultural wealth found in Latino communities – ethnic values, customs, traditions and language – into social capital. Social capital can be developed by providing Latino families with access to capital yielding opportunities such as understanding the importance of education in the U.S., information on the college application and financial aid process, and the identification of appropriate help seeking behaviors (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002; Cammarota, 2004). Additionally, schools can help Latino students better negotiate how to transform aspirational capital (a form of cultural wealth) into academic success by fostering inter-institutional (high school/college) relationships and connecting students to appropriate mentors to help Latino students navigate transitions from high school to college (Yamamura et al., 2010).

Several scholars have examined Latino student transitions from high school to college (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Perez Huber, Malagon, & Solórzano, 2009; Nunez, 2009a, 2009b; Barajas & Pierce, 2001). However, there is a limited body of research that includes Community Cultural Wealth as part of the analysis or research findings (Perez Huber, 2009; Burciaga & Erbstein, 2010, 2012). Among the limited scholarship is Yamamura, Martinez, and Sáenz's (2010) work, which utilizes Chicana feminist theory and Community Cultural Wealth to develop a hybrid framework—Borderland Cultural Wealth (BCW)—to examine stakeholder responsibilities for increasing Latina/o student college readiness in a border region of South Texas.

In their study, Yamamura et al. (2010) capitalize on the renewed attention in Texas to equal educational opportunities and specifically college readiness. Utilizing BCW, they examine the rich cultural assets found in a Texas borderland community comprised of Mexican immigrant populations where some are solely Spanish speakers and others are multi-generational residents who are fluent in both Spanish and English. Additionally, *colonias,* which are unincorporated, impoverished areas with sizeable populations of migrant, undocumented, and mixed status families contribute to the demographic composition of the borderland community. Within the South Texas region there is a rich network of community organizations that provide social services, which include "health education and college information" (p. 127). Accordingly, the impact of these community organizations and the rich community cultural assets present were examined to determine how they might increase college-going rates in the region. Additionally, the study sought to examine how community leaders, educators, parents, and students viewed the importance of college readiness.

To lay a foundation for college-going and college readiness, Yamamura et al. (2010) review literature on the college choice process, suggesting that the college choice process has been conceptualized based upon an individual model of college preparation and college access. The authors maintain that there should be a renewed examination of "the factors that facilitate college-going for these diverse groups" (p. 129). Furthermore, they argue that Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) 25 year old model, a three phase college choice process: "predisposition, search, and choice" (p. 129), may not consider the factors that facilitate college going for more recent diverse populations (i.e., low-income, first-generation, LGTBQ, Latino, and Asian) attending college today.

For Latino students, in particular, families and communities play a larger role in students' college preparation processes (Yamamura et al., 2010; Ceja, 2004). According to Yamamura et al. (2010), parents play a significant role by encouraging their children to attend college, but research suggests that Latino students receive relevant college information and guidance from non-parental figures. Still, within the family, siblings can play a critical role, especially when an older sibling has attended college (Ceja, 2004; Perez & McDonough, 2008). Outside of the family, high achieving peers can also be a college resource for Latino students. All of these family and community factors are not considered in Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) model. Moreover, Yamamura et al. (2010) posit, "[Hossler and Gallagher's] individual conceptualization neglects to fully interrogate the larger macro-system in which students and families prepare for college" (p. 129). Looking at the systemic structures that impact college-going and college readiness for Latino students is important because we cannot ignore the historical, socio-cultural, and policy systems that have undergirded and impacted those processes.

Thus, in their research Yamamura et al. (2010) examine how community leaders, high school students (on and off the college track), school leaders, teachers/counselors, and parents viewed their personal and professional (if applicable) responsibilities for Latino/a students' college readiness and college going. They found that there is a strong sense of stakeholder responsibility for college readiness from all stakeholders on two key levels: "as individuals (personally and professionally) and as a collective effort in conjunction with other stakeholders" (p.135). Consistent with a key Latino cultural value, collectivism, all stakeholders had a strong sense of collective responsibility for college readiness, although their views differed based on students' academic standings (strong academic college track students vs. those who were not college tracked).

Yamamura et al.'s (2010) work offers an interesting perspective on how to think about community cultural wealth. For example, in their study they suggest that personal responsibility should be viewed as a form of aspirational capital. In the parent stakeholder group, they found that college expectations were transmitted through *testimonios* (storytelling) and *consejos* (advice), but most parents did not attend college. Therefore, while parents were able to successfully inculcate their children with college expectations, "without adequate college experience and adequate college information, the degree to which testimonios was used to impart college knowledge and college readiness skills is called into question" (p. 141). Yamamura et al. (2010) advise that in order to adequately tap into parents BCW the gaps in their college knowledge must be addressed. Thus, their study uncovered aspirational capital in the parent stakeholder group, but it also identified gaps in parent knowledge about college, which they suggest might impact the value of the aspirational capital parents possess.

Like Yamamura et al. (2010), Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper (2009) also used Community Cultural Wealth as an alternative framework to examine how school stakeholders might be engaged in school improvement efforts. Liou et al.'s (2009) focus is on how to learn from the key resources available in Latino students' communities to develop "grassroots approaches" (p. 534) to support their college-going aspirations. They suggest that school reforms should integrate students' funds of knowledge into the cultural processes of schooling. Thus, through their study they describe how various community resources can be used to assist students with making connections to adults who believe in their chances of success.

Drawing on school culture literature and specifically the concept of teacher-student information networks, Liou et al. (2009) found care emerged as a recurring theme. This is consistent with research presented earlier that purports that caring relationships have great value for students (Noddings, 2005, 2012; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). When students are able to develop caring relationships with teachers they "perform better academically" (Liou et al, 2009, p. 536). Moreover, when adults are absent from the schooling process, research suggests that students are more likely to develop poor work habits, have lower grades, and be at greater risk of dropping out of school. Thus, school reform must move beyond simply examining structure and curriculum and include school culture. In their view school culture can be scrutinized via teacher-student information networks.

Liou et al. (2009) found that when students started at their respective high schools they believe they could succeed academically. Consistent with extant literature on student persistence, the students in their study felt the need to be "connected" with the school

(Tinto, 1993, 1997). Yet, the schools they attended were "large, impersonal, and understaffed" (p. 540), making it difficult for students to feel like they belonged. Consequently, students with college aspirations were less likely to develop support networks with adults in school. Instead, "they pointed to peers, local churches, and family members as their resources to access information that supported their academic aspirations" (p. 541).

Several scholars discuss what Liou et al. (2009) refer to as high stakes networks; only other scholars report it as social capital (Monkman et al., 2005; Saunders & Serna, 2004; Ream, 2003; Horvat et al., 2003; Pernus & Titus, 2005; Ceja, 2004). High stakes information networks are "networks [that] consist of knowing adults who are effective in mentoring students and provid[ing] them with academic expectations and psychological support in the forms of high stakes information" (p. 550). Through "high stakes information networks" students were able to access various sources of capital, which provided them with resources like homework help and mentorship (p. 542). In Liou et al.'s (2009) study, high stakes information consisted of knowledge about the college-going process, including applying to college and completing financial aid forms as well as how to translate college-going expectations into success.

Conclusion

When viewed collectively, the literature presented offers scholarly understandings of Latino male college experiences and how researchers have employed various conceptions of capital to examine how to better support them. Although research on Latino male college experiences is growing, it is still rather limited and framed in contexts that are typically deficit oriented and written *about* Latino males rather than *with*

them. How Latino males perceive the factors that contribute to their academic success in college is a noticeable gap in the literature. In fact, while there is a growing body of research that examines Latino male college experiences (Strayhorn, 2010; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011; Diaz-Strong, Gómez, Luna-Duarte, & Meiners, 2012), I have only encountered one study that privileges the voices of Latino males to help elucidate their understandings of their college experiences (Saénz, Lu, Bukowski, & Rodriguez, 2013). Therefore, this study seeks to privilege the voices of academically successful Latino male students on their pathways to college graduation. In the next section, I present literature that has been used to develop the conceptual framework that will guide this study.

Context for the Conceptual Framework

> First, you must understand and digest the fact that children, all children come to school motivated to enlarge their worlds. You start with *their* worlds. You do not look at them, certainly not initially, as organisms to be molded and regulated. You look at them to determine how what they are, seek to know, and have experienced can be used as the fuel to fire the process for enlargement of interest, knowledge, and skills. You do not look at them in terms of deficits: what they do not know but need to know. Far from having deficits, they are asset rich. You enter their worlds in order to aid them and you to build bridges between two worlds, not walls (Sarason, 1990, p. 164).

If you substitute the word *children* with the word *students*, the quote above would lay the foundation for the conceptual framework guiding this study. The concept of students' "worlds" is central to Phelan, Davidson, and Yu's (1998) Students' Multiple Worlds Model. In their model, the author's describe "worlds" as the multiple spaces in which students exist at any given time and the knowledge and behaviors that are necessary to operate within those spaces. Put another way, there are particular behavioral expectations that students have within the boundaries of their respective families, friends, and schools (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1993, p. 53) that influence their ways of knowing

and operating within schools and the larger society. Unpacking the quote, then, would suggest that educators should have an awareness of the multiple worlds students navigate and the rich cultural and experiential knowledge those worlds impart. Furthermore, educators should work in partnership with students to help them "build bridges" between the different worlds.

The proposed study will draw on the Students' Multiple Worlds Model by incorporating the typology of transitioning between borders that informs the model. Additionally, the conceptual model will integrate aspects of care, social capital, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth to create a comprehensive conceptual model for understanding Latino male perceptions of the factors that contribute to their academic success in college. In the following section, I will briefly discuss the theoretical and historical underpinnings of each theory, including a brief overview of Phelan et al.'s (1998) Multiple Worlds Model and their border transition construct.

Care

Caring has long been tied to teaching. Wilder (1999) offers that one common response teachers offer when asked why they want to teach is, "I care about children" (p. 356). Thus, it is not surprising that since the mid to late 1990's, the notion of caring has become a catchphrase in education (Goldstein, 1998), as evidenced by the surge in literature on ethics of care (Noddings, 1995, 2003, 2005, 2012; Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Vogt, 2002) and caring in schools (Noddings, 2005, 2012; Valenzula, 1999; Delpit, 2006). Care theory in education has been most influenced by the work of Noddings (2012), who asserts care is grounded in a "relational ethic" (p. 53). Essentially, for a caring relationship to exist the person doing the caring (carer) is attentive and the person

receiving the care (cared-for) is receptive. If the cared-for does not respond in a way that shows caring has been received, no caring relation exists.

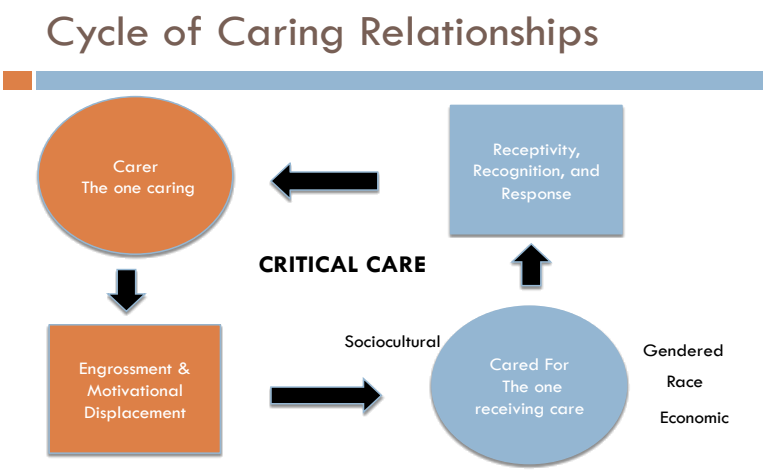
The interest in caring and ethics of care has led to a proliferation of research that applies care theory to explore student and teacher experiences. Thus, ethics of care portends significant contributions to understanding Latino male experiences in higher education. However, ethics of care has been heavily criticized for its colorblind approach, that fails to include economic, racial, gendered, and sociocultural factors that color the lens through which students of color experience care. Thus, critical care scholars argue that notions of care that are colorblind are not, in fact, caring relationships and contribute to the subtractive experiences students of color encounter in schools (Thompson, 1998, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006). As such, critical care scholars believe it is imperative that educators approach care from a "critical care" perspective that acknowledges the various social and cultural factors through which communities of color understand and experience caring.

Similarly, Gay (2010) suggests "that caring is a value, an ethic, and a moral imperative that moves self determination into social responsibility and uses knowledge and strategic thinking to decide how to act in the best interests of others" (p. 47). In Gay's assessment, in order for care to positively influence ethnically diverse students in educational settings, educators have to move away from caring *about* these students personal well-being and academic success, to caring *for* them, with the understanding that the two are interrelated. She posits caring *about* is relative to "feelings of concern for one's state of being," whereas caring *for* "is active engagement in doing something to

positively affect it" (p. 48). Furthermore, this kind of care, which Gay (2010) terms culturally responsive caring, aligns with culturally responsive teaching.

Therefore, my conceptual framework combines critical care with Gay's (2010) culturally responsive caring as a means of examining Latino male accounts of their college experiences. Figure 2.1 represents the cycle of critical caring relationships I adapted from the work of Noddings (2005), Gay (2010), and other critical care scholars (Thompson, 1998, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006), who argue for a non-colorblind approach to care that considers the sociocultural, gendered, racial and economic experiences of communities of color that impact they ways in which they view care and caring relationships.

Figure 2.1. Cycle of Critical Caring Relationships



Social Capital

The influential work of Portes (1998) offers historical and theoretical grounding from which to build a conceptual model. In 1998, Portes engaged in an examination of the origins and varying definitions of social capital, looking specifically at Bourdieu,

Coleman, and others. In his evaluation of the authors, he suggests that social capital has been stretched beyond its initial purposes and asserts that continuing to stretch the concept may jeopardize its heuristic value (Portes, p. 1). Further, the definitions of social capital are varied, which has led, in much of the literature, to misapplications of the concept (Portes, 1998; Dika & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Horvat et al., 2003; Goldthorpe, 2007). To understand social capital as a frame, we must first understand how social capital has been applied to educational research.

Bourdieu (1986) was the first sociologist to systematically and analytically develop a theory of social capital, which he defines as "the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of essentially institutionalized relationships or mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 51). Bourdieu's theory is grounded in symbolic power and a social reproduction framework. James Coleman, an American sociologist, is also heavily cited, often along with Bourdieu, in literature on social capital. Coleman (1988) conceptualized social capital as "a resource for action" (p. 95), which could be converted into "human capital, a proxy for agency" (Musoba & Baez, 2009). Contrary to Bourdieu's conceptualization, Coleman used social capital as a proxy for structural conditions, believing that individuals engage in certain relationships that are inhered with varying degrees of power (i.e., strong and weak) that can be used for social mobility and academic benefit (Monkman et al., 2005; Coradini, 2011). Both conceptions have been applied to research in American higher education and have at times been conflated, which is emblematic of what Musoba and Baez (2009) believe to be a mistranslation of Bourdieu's theory.

According to Portes (1998), Bourdieu (1986) provided "the first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital" (p. 3). The literature provides explicit references to Bourdieu's conceptualization of the term. However, a synthesis of the literature suggests that Bourdieu's framing of social capital is grounded in the notion that individuals build networks of resources based on group associations. These group associations are inhered with value, which depending on the sources and situations can be "withdrawn" and "spent" for an individual's economic or social benefit. Therefore, social capital consists of "social obligations or connections" (Dika & Singh, 2003, p. 33) and is convertible based on the amount of capital an individual can attain, store, and eventually access. Hence, the volume of social relationships and connections takes on important value. Stanton-Salazar (1997) maintains that relationships with "institutional agents" are beneficial, because they offer individuals opportunities to broaden their networks. According to Portes (1998), "Bourdieu's definition makes clear that social capital is decomposable into two elements: first, the social relationship itself that allows individuals to claim access to resources possessed by their associates, and second, the amount and quality of those resources" (p. 4). Like investing in stock, social relationships, as a result, must be carefully constructed and examined for "profitability" (p. 4).

While Portes (1998) offers a review of economist Glen Loury's conceptualization of social capital, since Loury's concept is not commonly applied to educational research, it is only used here as a launching pad for a discussion about James Coleman (1988), who built upon Loury's frame. Coleman's (1988) concept of social capital is congruent with Bourdieu's (1986). Coleman (1988), "defined social capital by its function as a 'variety

of entities with two elements in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain action of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure'" (Portes, 1998, p. 5). This "vague" definition is important, because according to Portes (1998) it was the catalyst for what Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau (2003) have termed "conceptual murkiness" (p. 321). Coleman's (1988) definition is most commonly cited in educational research (Dikah & Singh, 2002). Consequently, it has led to the "relabeling [of] a number of different and even contradictory processes as social capital" (Portes, p. 5). This has created challenges with its validity, as Coradini (2010) argues, "one of the principal problems in…confrontations and criticisms revolving around social capital stems from its decontextualized use, irrespective of its theoretical and epistemological bases" (p. 564).

According to Dika & Singh (2002), despite the different explanations in both sociologists' conceptualizations of social capital, their theories originate from an explanation of educational achievement and attainment. In fact, Bourdieu's suppositions about cultural reproduction and social capital were developed as alternative justifications of disparate academic achievement to skill deficit and human capital theories. Bourdieu developed his theories through research on French social stratification. He was interested in the ways different groups of socioeconomic classes moved through the social hierarchy in France. Thus, his theory of social reproduction and subsequent capital theories were not developed to explain individual social mobility. Conversely, Coleman's (1988) conceptualization was developed in the United States and takes a far more individualistic approach. Coleman (1988) argues, "Social capital constitutes a particular kind of resource available to an actor…Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure

of relations between actors and among actors" (p. 98). Thus, Coleman's conceptualization of social capital departs from Bourdieu's as it is concerned with human agency and not class structures.

Coleman (1988) proposes that social capital is intangible and can manifest in three forms: (1) trust, substantiated through obligations and expectations; (2) information channels, which are embedded in relationships; and (3) standards and measures that foster the good of all over the individual (Dika & Singh, 2002). Like Bourdieu, Coleman underscores the value of social networks, incorporating intergenerational closure – when parents know the parents of their children's friends – as a social construct that fosters the development of appropriate and effective standards of behavior, which can influence school performance (Horvat et al., 2003). According to Portes (1998), the notion of closure is of particular importance, because it refers to the existence of sufficient ties among a particular group of people, which ensures adherence to acceptable norms (p. 6). The application of this concept to education is significant because it correlates student behaviors, which lead to successful academic outcomes, with parental expectations, which are of sufficient consequence to motivate students to adhere to the acceptable standards.

Portes' (1998) work is rich with important explications of social capital. I will not exhaustively examine Portes' (1998) work; however it is important to note that Portes (1998) offers both the positive and negative consequences of social capital. He asserts that there is a sociological bias to draw upon the good things emerging out of sociability; conversely, the literature suggests that this is not the case for education researchers. Most important, however, is Portes' acknowledgment that to ignore the negative implications

of social capital would significantly diminish its value. The table below, extrapolated from Portes' (1998) work, provides an overview of what he asserts as positive and negative effects of social capital:

Table 2.1

Positive and negative effects of social capital (Portes, 1998).

Positive Effects of Social Capital	Negative Effects of Social Capital
1. Offer opportunities for social control based on developing normative behavioral expectations; 2. Family support; 3. Benefits mediated by extra-familial networks.	1. Excludes outsiders; 2. Excess claims on group members; 3. Restrictions on individual freedoms; 4. Downward leveling norms.

The concept of downward leveling norms is of particular interest as it may have some connection to Latino males who struggle to balance "street-kid" and "school-kid" identities (Flores-González, 2002). Portes (1998) posits, "[downward leveling norms] underlines the emergence of an oppositional stance toward the mainstream and a solidarity grounded in a common experience of subordination" (p. 17). This aligns with resistance literature that examines how some communities of color rebuff academic success because it creates an "acting white" persona (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Horvat & Lewis, 2003; Ogbu, 2004; Horvat & O'Connor, 2006).

Portes (1998) notes that understanding the negative effects of social capital is important so as not to romanticize "community networks, social control, and collective sanctions as unmixed blessings" (p. 15). Indeed, there are negative aspects of social capital that warrant consideration. The same strong ties that benefit some exclude others. For example, consider industries that have strong ethnic networks where "social capital generated by bounded solidarity and trust are the core of the group's economic advance"

(p. 15). The same social relations that yield social capital for some will implicitly restrict others.

Looking at social capital as a dichotomous deterministic theory is helpful to understanding its potential value to educational research. For the purposes of this study, social capital informs the conceptual framework and will be explored objectively to determine its influence on Latino male student behaviors. Therefore, I will consider how social capital provides students with various opportunities, but also consider how it might erect barriers to different "worlds" or opportunities. Looking at social capital from this perspective will provide a richer presentation of student perceptions and experiences.

Cultural Capital

According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital can manifest in three different states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. These different states interact in complex ways that are both overt and covert. In the embodied state, cultural capital is accumulated over time through an inculcation and assimilation of the dominant class' social values, which are traditionally passed on through upbringing and family relations (p. 50). Thus, an individual must invest personal time in the development of cultural capital, as it cannot be transmitted quickly or through delegation. This is not to suggest that cultural capital is only acquired through conscious effort. On the contrary, Bourdieu (1986) argues that cultural capital can be acquired unconsciously, but this type of acquisition determines it's distinctive value. Additionally, cultural capital is individually possessed and as such, "it cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriate capacities of an individual agent; it declines and dies with its bearer (with his biological capacity, his memory, etc.)" (p. 49). Moreover, in its embodied state, cultural capital is disguised and

assumes a symbolic role operating outside of the traditional notions of capital (i.e., economic, political, etc.). Thus, a form of cultural competence emerges where the possessor of the cultural capital has a level of proficiency for or adeptness of forms of culture that are of value to the dominant society (i.e., great art collections or cultural foundations).

In the objectified state, cultural capital is represented in material objects and media, such as poetry, writings, paintings, sculptures, architecture, etc. In this form, cultural capital can be tangibly transmitted through legal ownership and symbolic of the cultural capital it represents. Yet, ownership *only* signifies possession of the material object. For the object to have real cultural capital value the owner must also possess the cultural understanding of the object and how/why it has cultural significance to the dominant culture. This requires both conceptual and historical understandings of the object that are not transmitted through its possession.

Institutionalized cultural capital is the third form of capital outlined by Bourdieu (1986). Institutionalized capital manifests in the form of institutionalized recognition, most often in the form of academic qualifications. Institutionalized cultural capital thus can be leveraged on the labor market. Bourdieu (1986) argues,

> By conferring institutional recognition on the cultural capital possessed by any given agent, the academic qualification also makes it possible to compare qualification holders and even to exchange them (by substituting one for another in succession). Furthermore it makes it possible to establish conversion rates between cultural capital and economic capital by guaranteeing the monetary value of a given academic capital (p. 52).

This is best understood when you consider occupations like civil service or teaching, where qualifications, rank, and remuneration are linked to one's academic qualifications.

Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital could thus be summed up as the ways in which people use their cultural knowledge to undergird their place in societal hierarchy. Central to his conception of cultural capital, however, is the ways in which it is transmitted. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital "is subject to hereditary transmission which is heavily disguised" (p. 49) and hereditary transmission contributes to an individual's *habitus*. According to Wacquant (2005), habitus is "the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities, and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them" (p. 316). Thus, habitus is socially created and is the result of enduring and transferrable socialized norms that guide behaviors and thinking. According to Bourdieu (1986), habitus is shaped and replicated unconsciously, "without any deliberate pursuit of coherence…without any conscious concentration" (p. 170). Therefore, habitus becomes a crucial concept in understanding the transmission of cultural capital.

According to Goldthorpe (2007), "Typically, the *habitus* is formed in its essentials by what Bourdieu (1986) calls 'domestic' influences, and is then further developed only through the individuals own subsequent experience of 'class conditions'…Bourdieu emphasises that *habitus* acquired within their families by children of dominant classes is then underwritten, as it were, in the course of their education" (p. 6). This is an important point, as Bourdieu argues that education cannot account for or mitigate the divide between higher and lower socioeconomic students. Thus, the accumulation of cultural capital by lower socioeconomic students (typically minority)

through education will not bridge the gap with those who come from more affluent families who have transmitted cultural capital over generations.

Goldthorpe (2007) assumes a counter position to Bourdieu (1986) on the role educational systems play in the production and reproduction of cultural capital. Goldthorpe (2007) argues, "To hold, as Bourdieu in effect does, that the development and functioning of modern educational systems essentially confirm and stabilize the processes through which individuals and families maintain their social positions over time lacks *prima facie* plausibility" (p. 7). A 1980 study by Halsey, Heath, and Ridge, supports Goldthorpe's claim. In their study, Halsey et al. (1980) found that as secondary education expanded in Great Britain, substantial and predominantly upward mobility did in fact occur between generations. Thus, Halsey et al. (1980) posit schools

> …were doing far more than "reproducing" cultural capital; they were creating it, too…they were not merely maintaining a "cycle of privilege" in which cultural capital is acquired by those from educated homes. They were at least offering an opportunity to acquire cultural capital to those homes that had not secured it in the past (p. 77).

Their findings suggest that schools can both reproduce *and* create cultural capital, an significant departure from Bourdieu's position.

Similarly, Carter (2005) departs from Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of cultural capital by offering non-dominant cultural capital, which she refers to as "Black" cultural capital, as an alternative. In her estimation, although "many poor, African American students have little familiarity with the dominant society's body of cultural know-how, they, nonetheless, possess cultural capital" (p. 49). Here she makes an

important contribution, suggesting two types of cultural capital: dominant and non-dominant.

According to Carter (2005), dominant cultural capital aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) conception "as a resource that can eventually yield some economic and social returns" (p. 49). Conversely, non-dominant cultural capital

> Consists of a set of tastes, appreciations, and understandings, such as preferences for particular linguistic, musical, and dress styles, and physical gestures used by lower status groups [*sic*] members to gain "authentic" cultural status positions in their respective communities. The process that different social groups use to create internal cultural boundaries separating the "real" member from the "not real" member defines what is authentic for that culture…As groups socially construct what is authentic, their members require facility with myriad in-group cultural codes and signals or non-dominant cultural capital (p. 50).

Although dominant cultural capital has been associated with academic success, non-dominant cultural capital has many important functions including creating a "coherent, positive self-image (or set of images) in the face of hardship or subjugation" (p. 57), "in-group allegiance and…a sense of belonging" (p. 51). It seems, then, that non-dominant cultural capital may also benefit non-dominant students (i.e., Blacks and Latinos) as they navigate social institutions that were not established with their success in mind. Thus, cultural capital, which includes non-dominant forms of cultural capital, informs the conceptual framework by helping to elucidate how Latino male students leverage their cultural knowledge and the institutional resources with which they have access to achieve academic success in college.

Community Cultural Wealth

A hybrid framework that takes an asset based approach to exploring Latino male college experiences finds support in the work of Solórzano and Yosso (2002). Solórzano and Yosso (2002), argue that a very narrow range of characteristics that are defined and valued by the White middle class limits Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital theory. Thus, capital is viewed as "one's accumulated assets and resources" (p. 129). Instead, they propose cultural wealth as a more inclusive and comprehensive lens through which to examine communities of color; cultural wealth "encompasses accumulated assets and resources found in communities of color" (p. 129). Cultural wealth includes various forms of capital, including aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Valdez & Lugg, 2010; Marsh & Desai, 2012; Jayakumar, Vue, & Allen, 2013).

Building on cultural wealth, Yosso (2005) conceptualized community cultural wealth as an alternative to traditional interpretations of capital. Grounded in a Critical Race Theory (CRT) paradigm, community cultural wealth aims to refocus research from a deficit oriented perspective that views communities of color as sites of poverty and deprivation, and instead focuses on the rich cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources that exist in those respective communities. Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth includes the six forms of capital that are encompassed in cultural wealth. Table 2.2 lists and defines each form.

Table 2.2

*Definitions of Community Cultural Wealth forms of Capital (*Yosso, 2005, pgs. 77-80)

Community Cultural Wealth	**Definition**
Aspirational Capital	The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of real or perceived barriers.
Linguistic Capital	The intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.
Familial Capital	Those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition.
Social Capital	Networks of people and community resources.
Navigational Capital	Skills of maneuvering through social institutions.
Resistant Capital	Those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

Perez Huber (2009) extended Yosso's community cultural wealth model to include a seventh form of capital, spiritual capital, which is defined as "a set of resources and skills rooted in a spiritual connection to a reality greater than oneself" (p. 721). These forms of capital are non-deterministic and draw on the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) students of color carry with them from their homes and communities and, in combination with social and cultural capital, provide a richer and more comprehensive account of Latino male college experiences.

Community cultural wealth centers the experiences of people of color at the heart of research that seeks to examine their experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso,

2005; Valdez & Lugg, 2010; Marsh & Desai, 2012; Jayakumar et al., 2013). In educational research, this is particularly noteworthy, as it allows for non-dominant perspectives to have a voice and a place in the literature. Yosso and García (2007) explain:

> As we decenter whiteness and recenter the research lens on People of Color, we can validate often-overlooked forms of cultural knowledge forged in a legacy of resilience and resistance to racism and other forms of subordination. Centering our analytical lens on the experiences of Communities of Color in a critical historical context allows us to "see" the accumulated assets and resources in the histories and the lives of marginalized communities. This act of reframing builds on an extensive body of critical social science research that has consistently identified culture as a resource for Communities of Color, rather than a detriment (p. 154).

Yosso and García (2007) like other scholars who utilize community culture wealth, are concerned with reframing research so as not to disregard the cultural assets that are available to people of color within their respective communities. Thus, for approximately a decade, since Yosso (2005) asked the question "whose culture has capital?" and challenged traditional notions of capital, there has been a slow but steady growth in educational research that utilizes the community cultural wealth model to help interpret and understand research findings (Jayakumar et al., 2013; Burciaga & Erbstein, 2012; Luna & Martinez, 2012; Marsh & Desai, 2012; Gonzales, 2012; Valdez & Lugg, 2010; Liou et al, 2009; Perez Huber, 2009; Yosso & García, 2007).

Community cultural wealth is grounded in a CRT epistemological frame and often complemented by LatCrit theory methodologies. CRT is a product of the legal studies field and according to Crenshaw (2002) grew out of concerns from a growing body of legal scholars who felt restrained by work that disconnected critical theory from issues of race and racism. Thus, Crenshaw (2002) and other scholars concerned with issues of race sought "both a critical space in which race was foregrounded and a race space where critical themes were central" (p. 19). Yosso (2005) maintains that as a result, in the late 1980s CRT emerged as critical legal studies scholars continued to push against the role of the traditional legal system that maintained the status quo of oppressive social constructs. Consequently, women and people of color who believed their gendered, cultural, ethnic, immigrant, and classed experiences were being ignored began to critique critical legal studies for its emphasis on the Black/White binary that has traditionally dominated race conversations (Parker & Lynn, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). While the Black experience in America is one that deserves considerable exploration and attention, focusing exclusively on the Black experience both limits the ways in which various marginalized groups experience, respond to, and resist racism and ignores the complexities associated with race, culture, and ethnicity (Crenshaw, 2002).

Indeed race, gender, culture, language, immigration, socioeconomic status, and phenotype intersect and interact, shaping the experiences of people of color very differently than Whites. Yet, the popular and academic discourse is still framed around the Black/White binary (Yosso, 2005; Ellison, 1990). CRT moves toward a more inclusive discourse that expands the dialogue to include Latinos, Native Americans,

Asians, and women and attempts to uncover the blind spots that can limit conversations about race and racism.

According to Solórzano (1997, 1998), there are five precepts of CRT that should be considered when applying CRT to educational research. Building on an earlier collaboration with Solórzano, Yosso (2005) argues these five precepts should play a central role in the development of research, theory, curriculum, and policy. Thus, CRT centers research so that it focuses on race, racism, and the intersections of various forms of oppression. CRT also challenges dominant ideologies that are embedded in educational theory and practice and values the significance of experiential knowledge, which should be utilized in research. CRT also employs interdisciplinary approaches to research and is guided by a commitment to social justice (Solórzano, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Perez Huber, 2009). Yosso (2005) acknowledges that these precepts in and of themselves are not new—there is a small historical body of earlier research, dating back to the mid 1990's that began to use these tenets in various bodies of research. However, the synthesis of these precepts into one framework in education did not occur until the early 2000s (Yosso, 2005).

LatCrit theory grew out of CRT, but extended CRT beyond the Black/White binary by emphasizing the intersectionality of various forms of subordination, including sexism, nativism, classism, monolingualism, and heterosexism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Drawing on Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (1997, 2001), Perez Huber (2009) reminds us that, "LatCrit enables researchers to better articulate the specific experiences of Latinas/os through a more focused examination of the unique forms of oppression this group encounters" (p. 708). Thus in educational research, anti-subordination scholars

engage LatCrit theory to more fully expose the ways in which Latinas/os are subjected to marginalizing and subordinate experiences in educational institutions.

Important to LatCrit theory and it's use as a methodological framework is the challenge it presents to "dominant ideology, which supports deficit notions about students of color while assuming 'neutrality' and 'objectivity'" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 38). Thus, research commonly places the onus for the academic outcomes of students of color on students and their families, while ignoring the responsibility of educational institutions and the social structures that create inequitable experiences for communities of color. As such, CRT and LatCrit appropriately undergird community cultural wealth, which aims to value and expose the cultural assets available in communities of color. Community Cultural Wealth will inform the conceptual framework guiding this study by elucidating more comprehensive forms of capital that move beyond deterministic approaches to understanding Latino male student experiences.

Students' Multiple Worlds Model Transition Patterns

The Students' Multiple Worlds Model developed by Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1998) is a construct that is grounded in cultural compatibility theory and literature that examines how students negotiate borders. Cultural compatibility theory originated out of a desire to explain differential patterns of school achievement of US minority students (Whaley & Noël, 2012). The framework "assumes that values, beliefs, expectations, and normative ways of behaving are acquired first in children's home environments. However, when children enter school, what is expected and thought to be appropriate can be quite different from what children learned at home – particularly for minority youth in the United States" (Phelan et al., 1998, p. 9). Thus, cultural compatibility theorists draw

on literature that examines cultural differences between minority students' home lives and school and argue that cultural incongruence between the two results in misunderstandings and conflicts (Erickson, 1993; Phelan et al., 1998; Cooper & Denner, 1998; Whaley & Noël, 2012).

The Students' Multiple Worlds Model was inductively developed from an ethnographic study of 55 students in two urban high schools in California. Phelan et al. (1998) concluded that students' abilities to navigate between "worlds" varied widely and affected their chances of using schools as a foundation for higher-level study and meaningful adult and professional experiences. Defining "worlds" as "cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries of students' particular families, peer groups, and schools" (p. 7), they assume that each of the students' worlds has its own cultural and belief systems that are familiar to insiders. Moreover, each of the "worlds" students must negotiate has it own set of borders and boundaries. The distinction between borders and boundaries relates directly to the Student's Multiple Worlds Model. Drawing from the work of Erickson (1993), Phelan et al. (1998) describe boundaries as "behavioral evidence of culturally different standards of appropriateness that are politically neutral. When boundaries exist, no special rights of obligations accrue to individuals or groups" (p. 10). Thus movement between worlds can occur with relative ease. However, challenges arise when students have to negotiate various borders. Borders are described as "features of cultural difference that are not politically neutral" (p. 10). Therefore, when students encounter borders they have more difficulty navigating between worlds because of the differences in behavioral expectations and the required insider knowledge that would help facilitate easier movement.

Phelan et al. (1998) found that students have six different types of Transitions Between Borders: (1) Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transitions; (2) Different Worlds/Border Crossings Managed; (3) Different Worlds/Border Crossings Difficult; (4) Different Worlds/Border Crossings Resisted; (5) Congruent Worlds/Border Crossings Resisted; and, (6) Different Worlds/Smooth Transitions (p. 14-15). These transitions between borders will contribute to the conceptual model applied to this research by helping to frame how students negotiate the multiple spaces they occupy as they pursue academic success in college. The table below briefly defines each of the transitions.

Table 2.3

Transitions Between Borders (Phelan et al., 1998, p. 14 - 15)

Transitional Typologies	Definition
Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transitions	Moving from one setting to another is harmonious and uncomplicated.
Different Worlds/Border Crossings Managed	Students in this category perceive differences in their worlds but utilize strategies that enable them to manage crossings successfully. High-achieving students typically exhibit patterns of this type.
Different Worlds/Border Crossings Difficult	Students in this typology define their family, peer, and/or school worlds as distinct from one another. These students find transitions difficult. They must adjust and reorient as they move across borders and among contexts.
Different Worlds/Border Crossings Resisted	In this type, the values, beliefs, and expectations across worlds are so discordant that students perceive borders as insurmountable and actively or passively resist transitions. Low achieving students are typical of this type.
Congruent Worlds/Border Crossings Resisted	While these students describe the sociocultural components of their world as congruent, they are unable to successfully accomplish transitions. Typical of this type are students who do exceptionally well on standardized tests but receive low failing grades.
Different Worlds/ Smooth Transitions	Students of this type describe their worlds as distinct but experience transitions as relatively effortless. They have little difficulty in switching from one cultural mode to another or in blending aspects from each of their worlds.

The theoretical perspectives presented in this section have been integrated to create a comprehensive conceptual model that will guide this study. Although five theoretical conceptions are presented, I am categorizing social capital, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth under one umbrella that I have termed capital conceptions and care and patterns of transition under another that I am calling Critical Caring Transitions. Taken together, these two categorizations create a comprehensive lens to analyze Latino male academic experiences.

Conceptual Framework: Capital Conceptions/Critical Transitions Model

Central to the capital conceptions/critical transitions model developed for this study are Latino male students' perceptions about the factors that contribute to their academic achievement in college. Building from there, students' perceptions will be analyzed through various conceptions of capital (i.e., social, cultural, aspirational, etc.) to consider how these capital theories reinforce students' college achievement. For example, as a first-generation Latino male college student, I lacked any knowledge of how to navigate the college environment. However, I was a member of an opportunity program (a form of social capital) that provided me with mentorship (social capital) and guidance on how to find resources available around campus (social capital, navigational capital, cultural capital) that could contribute to my academic success.

Although this study focuses on Latino male students in college, it also recognizes the "multiple worlds" in which they live and that influence their achievement in college. Phelan et al. (1993) posit, "we know a great deal about how aspects of families, schools, and teachers, and peer groups independently affect educational outcomes. But we know very little about how these worlds combine in the day to day lives of [students] to affect

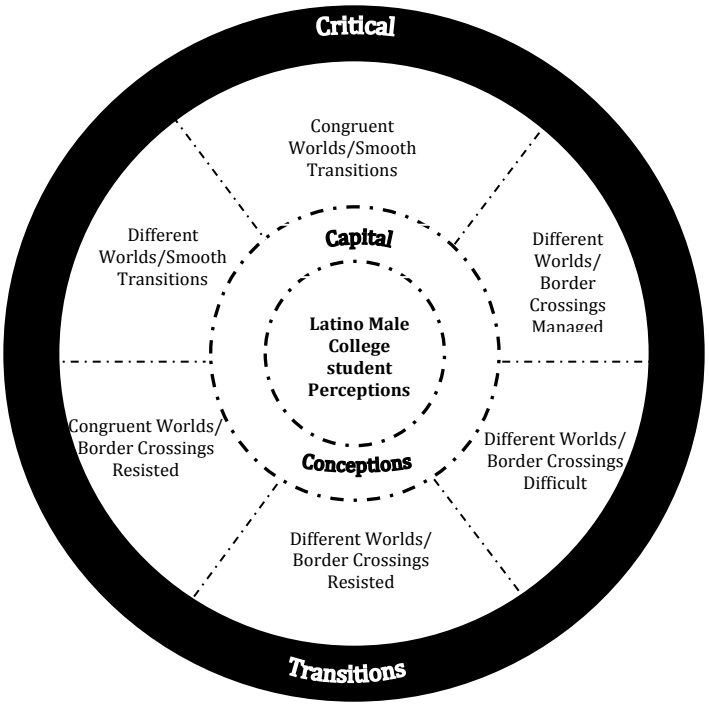
their engagement with school and classroom contexts" (p. 54). This is true of Latino male educational experiences and is an important area of consideration with respect to their academic achievement. Therefore, this study will also look at the ways in which Latino male students negotiate and transition between the "multiple worlds" in which they reside, with a specific focus on how those transitions impact their academic achievement in college.

To accomplish this I will use a lens that I refer to as "Critical Transitions." As noted earlier, critical transitions draws on two areas: care—a conflation of Noddings' (2005) ethic of care, Gay's (2010) culturally responsive care, and the notion of critical care put forth by difference scholars (Thompson, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006)—and transitions between borders (Phelan et al., 1998). As an example of a critical transition, consider a Latino male who is attending college, while working, and providing additional support to his family, either through financial contributions or other familial obligations (i.e., taking care of siblings). At best, this student will negotiate three different "worlds," if not more as they manage their college experience. Looking at this student's experiences through the lens of critical transitions will enable me to consider how his cultural, economic, gender, and racial experiences influence (1) the relationships (which may or may not be grounded in care) he must negotiate; (2) how he is able to transition between his multiple worlds; and, (3) how these experiences impact his academic achievement in college. Additionally, I will be able to explore how care operates to help facilitate smooth and/or difficult transitions.

In figure 2.2 below, Latino male students' perceptions are placed in the center of the first of four concentric circles. The use circles are intentional; student experiences

rarely happen in a linear fashion. Further, the use of dotted lines represents the fluidity between the various spheres of the conceptual model. The second of the circles is representative of the various forms of capital through which Latino male perceptions will be evaluated. Moreover, the symbol of the circle surrounding the Latino male students perceptions indicates how these various forms of capital operate independently and collectively. Moving beyond the circle of capital conceptions, the third circle represents the patterns of transition adopted from Phelan et al.'s (1998) Students' Multiple Worlds Model. The last of the concentric circles, critical transitions, intentionally encapsulates the model. Critical transitions are inclusive of critical caring relationships, capital conceptions, and the ways in which Latino males transition through their multiple worlds—all of which influence both their perceptions of the factors that contribute to their academic achievement in college *and* their actual academic achievement.

Figure 2.2 Capital Conceptions/Critical Transitions Model



CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study examined Latino male college students' perceptions of what factors helped them achieve success in college. As noted in chapter 1, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors do Latino males perceive as contributing to their academic success in college?
2. How do various forms of capital influence Latino male college experiences?
3. How do Latino male college students negotiate transitions between the multiple spaces (school, family, workplace, and community) they occupy?
4. What role, if any, does "care" play in Latino male college students' academic achievement?, and
5. How do Latino male college students describe and understand academic achievement?

I begin this chapter by describing the epistemological framework that guided this study, the study's design, and modes of inquiry. Next, I describe the sampling process and how participants were selected. I then describe the data collection processes and analysis procedures that I employed. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of my positionality, study limitations, and the strategies I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

Since I was interested in privileging the voices of Latino male students and their perceptions of the factors that contributed to their academic achievement in college, I used a qualitative research design. According to Maxwell (2005), "The strengths of

qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers" (p. 22). Thus, unlike quantitative research, which tests hypotheses and objective theories, qualitative research focuses on examining participants' understandings and behaviors from their own perspectives. This allows themes and theories to emerge through the process of analyzing the data to determine what is significant to participants (Phillips, 1995; Maxwell, 2005; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Additionally, this study's design aligned with a social constructivist epistemological perspective. Social constructivists operate from a belief that society and its various dimensions are not fixed or essential, but are instead produced by social interactions and exist in people's minds (Phillips, 1995; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007). To social constructivists, knowledge is a human product that is socially and culturally constructed (Gredler, 1997; Phillips, 1995). What this means is that individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and the environment in which they live. Therefore, applying a social constructivist approach to qualitative research focuses the researcher on the complex ways participants make sense of their experiences and the interactions they have with other individuals and social structures (Merriam, 2009). In this study, I used a social constructivist approach to understand how peers, family members, college personnel and institutional and community support systems influenced participants' academic experiences and success in college.

In order to gain a rich understanding of participants' perceptions of why and how they were academically successful in college, I used a case study research design.

According to Hancock & Algozzine (2006), case study methodology is advantageous for researchers seeking "to gain in-depth understandings of situations and meaning for those involved" (p. 11). Through case study the researcher conducts in-depth analysis of a "single unit or system bounded by space and time" (p.11) through the use of multiple sources of data and a variety of data collection techniques (i.e., interviews, observations, field notes, and artifact analysis) (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Cresswell, 2007; Yin, 2009; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this particular study, the bounded system or "case" was each individual Latino male participant, who represented a "smaller case" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006) from which themes and theories emerged. Data sources included interviews, questionnaires, and artifacts.

I selected case study as my method of inquiry because I was interested in understanding the perceptions of a specific group of students (Latino males) within a particular context (college). Since I was interested in focusing on one issue (factors contributing to academic achievement in college) from multiple perspectives (capital, caring, transition patterns), this was a collective case study. According to Baxter & Jack (2008), data collected in a collective case study should be considered "robust and reliable" (p. 505). Additionally, Creswell (2007) maintains that collective case studies are useful when the researcher is interested in uncovering multiple perspectives on the research topic (p. 74). Using rich and varied data, this study examined multiple cases of success among Latino male college students, with a focus on participants' own perspectives.

Participants & Recruitment

In selecting participants, I used purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling involves the selection of research participants with a particular purpose in mind. Maxwell (2005) identifies multiple goals for purposeful sampling. The two goals that aligned with this study were: (1) to deliberately examine cases that provided insight into existing and/or developing theories; and, (2) to make comparisons that elucidated the reasons for differences between individuals' experiences (p. 90).

The purpose of the study was not to generalize to the population from which participants were drawn, which would have required a broader and random selection of subjects. Rather, the present study was largely exploratory. As qualitative studies on the everyday experiences of Latino males who are academically successful are rare, this study sought to present the experiences of Latino males who are academically achieving in college in an effort to uplift positive stories of Latino male college success.

The aim of this study was not to generalize to the larger population of Latino males. Rather, the goal was to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. Therefore, I purposely chose to limit the sample size of the study to 10 participants. Limiting the sample size allowed me to conduct a rich analysis of the data that I collected. Additionally, 10 participants provided enough data to make comparisons across participants. In order to meet the criteria for participation in the study, participants had to: (1) self identify as a Latino male; (2) be between 18 and 24 years old; (3) be enrolled fulltime in a postsecondary higher education institution; and (4) possess a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher at the time of selection.

To identify potential research participants, I worked with the various institutional offices across multiple mid-Atlantic higher education institutions that had access to Latino males in order to generate a list of potential participants. Once the list was generated, I sent an email invitation to each individual on the list [see Appendix B].

This study endeavored to contribute to existing knowledge on Latino males in college from an asset-based perspective by drawing on conceptions of capital (social, cultural, community cultural wealth), care, and transition patterns to better understand how they were able to achieve academic success. Moreover, the 18 to 24 age group was chosen because it corresponded to the commonly held definition of a traditional college student as one who enrolls in college studies immediately after graduation from high school and graduates within 6 years. Additionally, the 18 to 24 age range is commonly used to represent "young adults" in national studies of educational attainment, employment, and other socioeconomic indicators. Bounding the sample in this way helped to contextualize the participants' experiences in relation to extant data.

The 3.0 GPA was selected as the measure of success in this study because it is also equivalent to 85% on a percentile scale, representing successful academic achievement. The 3.0 GPA is a critical metric for various scholarships and is considered by the University of Maryland to be "good mastery of the subject and good scholarship" (testudo.umd.edu).

Participant Profiles

The ten Latino males who volunteered to participate in this study are briefly profiled here. Although not an intentional part of this study's design, all of the participants attended the same community college in the mid-Atlantic region of the

United States. Four of the 10 participants transferred to four-year colleges and universities in the northeast after receiving their Associate's degrees. Of the four participants that transferred, two graduated with their Bachelor's degrees in 2014, another is scheduled to graduate in May 2015, and the last one is scheduled to graduate in May 2016.

The remaining six participants were at different stages in their academic careers. One, who did not transfer, also graduated with his Associate's degree in 2014, and was in the process of completing coursework to receive an additional Associate's degree in Business Management. One other participant was in his first year, and the remaining four participants were in their second year at the community college.

All of the participants were traditional college age (i.e., 18-24 years old), single, and had no legal dependents. Nine participants reported living in a dual parent household and one indicated being raised by his mother and father until the age of 12. At 12, his mother left him with his father and never returned home. Thus, he was raised by his father until the age of 15, and then migrated to the United States, where he lived with his half brother for a period of time and then his stepsister.

Participant's socioeconomic statuses varied significantly. One participant's family earned less than $29,000 annually. Five participants families earned between $30,000 and $49,000. Another three participants reported their families annual income ranged from $50,000 to $79,000 and the remaining participant reported that his family's average annual income was in excess of $100,000.

Family educational attainment levels also varied. Six of the participants identified as first-generation college students, with three participants indicating that both parents

obtained high school diplomas. Two other participants indicated that their mothers had earned a high school diploma, while their fathers had failed to complete high school. The final participant who identified as a first-generation college student indicated that his mother had never attended formal schooling and his father completed a middle school education. Among the remaining four participants, three indicated that both parents earned a Bachelor's degree and one indicated that his mother attained a high school diploma and his father earned a Bachelor's degree. However, only one of the participants had parents that attained a post secondary degree in the United States.

Eight of the participants also balanced working with demanding course schedules. All of the participants who worked expressed the need to do so in order to assist with their families' expenses. Three of the participants worked full-time while being enrolled in full-time study. Another three participants worked at least 30 hours per week while balancing their course loads. The demands of work and school made it difficult for the eight participants to get involved in extra-curricular activities, but three of the eight participants who worked also participated in sports related activities. The two remaining participants did not work; one was actively involved in theater productions that precluded his working and the other was discouraged from working by his parents, who insisted that he focus on his studies.

Participant Profiles

Andres graduated from community college with an Associate's Degree in Automotive Technology. He grew up in Bolivia and attended a private American school called the "American Cooperative School (ACS)." He attributed attending ACS to his parents, who believed it was important for him to learn both English and Spanish. While

attending community college, Andres maintained a 3.0 cumulative GPA. Andres' educational experiences were unique from other participants in that he attended two other universities before enrolling in and graduating from community college. He is very close with his family, but lives with his aunt, who volunteered to support him while he completed his college education in the United States. His mother and father still live in Bolivia and Andres visits them during the holidays and summer breaks.

Chele was a first-year community college student at the time of data collection majoring in Criminal Justice. He grew up in El Salvador and was abandoned by his mother at the age of 12, when she left him to go live with "another guy." When his mom left, his 78-year old father cared for him. As a result, Chele reportedly turned to the streets and began hanging out with "gangsters and drug dealers." After three near death experiences, years of experimenting with drugs, and the death of several friends, Chele fled to the United States where he was apprehended at the border with $100.00 in his pocket and a dream of starting over. After a short stay with a half-brother in New York, Chele moved out of New York State to live with his stepsister in another mid-Atlantic state.

Flaco graduated from community college with an Associate's degree in Communications. At the time of the study, he was accepted and preparing to transfer to a predominantly White university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He grew in an urban community in the mid-Atlantic and attended a private school where his mother worked as a teacher's aide from preprimary through sixth grades. Thus he attended private school until he graduated from high school. He maintained a 3.06 GPA while studying at the community college.

J.J. is a self-identified Afro-Latino from Panama who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. His family relocated to the United States when he was 13 years old. His parents always encouraged him to attend college and he always took his academics very seriously. After graduating from high school, he applied to seven schools, was accepted to six, but could not afford to attend any because of his undocumented status. As a result, he enrolled in the honors program at the local community college, where he came to terms with his sexual identity, came out as a gay male, and became an activist for both immigrant and gay rights.

Johnny was a second year community college student majoring in General Studies. He is the younger of two children and his Peruvian parents migrated to the United States before he was born. He never imagined himself attending college, mostly because he never really thought that far ahead. His parents always encouraged him to do well in school, and he used his sister, who was a strong student, as a role model. Johnny reportedly took school seriously and worked hard to ensure that he maintained good grades and earned a GPA that was "close to or better than" his sisters.

Jon was a second year community college student of Brazilian descent and the only participant from a non-Spanish speaking family. He was majoring in General Studies at the time of data collection. He is the oldest of two children and a first-generation college student. His mother and father were young parents and made many sacrifices for the family, including dropping out of school and relocating to the United States. When Jon completed high school, he applied and was accepted to his first choice University, but could not afford to attend because of his undocumented status. As a result, he enrolled in community college and is now a benefactor of the DREAM Act and

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA[5]), which allows him to work while attending school.

Junior was also a second year community college student majoring in Building Trades Technology. He was born in the Dominican Republic where he completed his elementary and middle school education and began his first year of high school. During his freshman year, his family relocated to the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, where he was enrolled and subsequently graduated from high school. He identified as someone who always had good grades throughout his academic experiences, but struggled to learn English when he moved to the United States. Junior has a very close relationship with his father and works alongside him as carpenter during the day and attends classes in the evening. He has been able to successfully balance his work and school life and has maintained a 3.5 cumulative GPA.

Marco was a fourth year double major in Political Science and History at a university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He and his twin brother, Pepe, migrated to the United States with his mother, father, and younger brother when he was a freshman in high school. Transitioning to the United States was not easy; he encountered systemic and social challenges because he did not speak English. He was enrolled in ESOL and found himself academically frustrated because of the language barrier. This was especially difficult because Marco's family believed education was very important. Thus, as a student in Peru, Marco maintained excellent grades and was routinely rewarded for his academic accomplishments. But, once in the United States Marco found

[5] Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is an executive action that was issued under President Obama in 2012 and expanded in 2014. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency has administrative oversight of the executive action. Refer to www.uscis.gov for additional information.

himself struggling to learn English. This changed, however, when he joined the soccer team! He loved to play and learned that in order to get field time he had to maintain good grades. He began to set goals for him self and soon enough was excelling academically and learning to master English. He maintained a 4.0 cumulative GPA throughout his college career.

Mateo was a second year community college student majoring in American Sign Language. He is a second generation Latino of Ecuadorian and Salvadorian descent and a first-generation college student. His passion lies in Theater Arts, but his parents encouraged him to pursue a degree in a field where he would be able to support himself in the future. When he was a child he had a friend who was deaf and a part of the deaf and hard of hearing program offered by the elementary school he attended. This experience sparked his interest in American Sign Language and he decided to study it fulltime. Although he has maintained a 3.0 cumulative GPA as an undergraduate, he recounted many academic challenges in middle and high school. For example, he had difficulty with mathematics and failed several courses in high school. Participating in theater productions really motivated him to maintain good grades. Throughout high school and college, Mateo has performed in numerous stage productions.

Pepe graduated his undergraduate institution with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services. He graduated with at 3.4 cumulative GPA, but prior to attending college had many of the same challenges his twin brother, Marco, had with learning English. Pepe's story is a slightly different than his brother. As a high school student, Pepe's sole motivation for maintaining good grades was playing soccer. He described himself as the type of high school student that always got above a 3.0 GPA, but really did the bare

minimum to get by. In college, however, his motivation shifted. As a first-year college student, he found success on the soccer field and started to develop a reputation as a strong player. As a result, he was elected team captain, and took that responsibility very seriously. Although he had challenges academically, he took advantage of different supports in order to maintain his grades and set an example for his teammates.

Table 3.1

Demographic Profile of Participants

Name	Ethnicity	Family Income
Andres	Bolivian	$100,000 – $109,000
Chele	Salvadoran	$30,000 – $39,000
Flaco	Mexican/ Salvadoran	$70,000-$79,000
J.J.	Panamanian	$40,000-$49,000
Johnny	Peruvian	$20,000 - $29,000
Jon	Brazilian	$50,000-$59,000
Junior	Dominican	$40,000 - $49,000
Marco	Peruvian	$30,000 – 39,000
Mateo	Ecuadorian/ Salvadoran	$60,000-$69,000
Pepe	Peruvian	$30,000-$39,000

Table 3.2

Academic standing of participants from June 2014 through December 2014

Name	First-Gen Student College Student	Major	GPA	Worked While Enrolled	Transfer Status	Expected Date of Graduation & Degree
Andres	No	Automotive Technology	3.0	Yes	No	AA 8/2014
Chele	Yes	Criminal Justice	3.0	Yes	No	AA 8/2016
Flaco	Yes	Communications	3.06	Yes	Yes	BA 5/2017
J.J.	Yes	Sociology	3.6	Yes	Yes	BA 5/2014
Johnny	Yes	General Studies	3.71	No	No	AA 5/2015
Jon	Yes	General Studies	3.67	Yes	No	BA 5/2017
Junior	No	Building Trades Technology	3.5	Yes	No	AA 12/2015
Marco	No	Political Science & History	4.0	Yes	Yes	BA 5/2015
Mateo	Yes	American Sign Language	3.0	No	No	AA 5/2015
Pepe	No	Human Services	3.4	Yes	Yes	BA 5/2014

Data Sources

Primary and secondary sources were collected to create a rich and detailed account of each participant's experiences. Primary data was collected through one-on-one and focus group interviews as well as a questionnaire. Secondary data included self-selected documents that participants felt represented their academic achievement. Data collection methods are detailed below.

Individual Interviews

This study used a semi-structured interview protocol, which allowed for focused, conversational, two-way communication (Merriam, 2009). This permitted me the flexibility needed for participants to talk about what they felt was significant to their experiences. Interview questions addressed topics such as participants' prior schooling experiences, their academic decision-making processes, types of academic supports they utilized, such as tutoring or advising, and academic challenges they experienced in college.

Drawing on the interview protocol recommended by Seidman (2005), I conducted three interviews lasting 60 to 90 minutes with each participant. I began the initial interview by explaining the purpose of the research project. I then provided each participant with the consent form and questionnaire (see Appendix A and C). I did not begin the interview until I had answered any and all questions from the participant and the participant had signed the consent form and given me verbal permission to proceed with and to record the interview. In the first interview, participants were asked to reflect on their life history as it pertained to their educational trajectory and recount as much about their experiences as they were comfortable sharing in the allotted timeframe. After

they completed their first interview, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that included demographic information and information on their academic experiences.

The second interview focused on details of participants' current lived experiences. The questions presented in this interview prompted participants to talk about what they did to achieve academic success and any relationships they believe played a critical role in their educational trajectory. Additionally, I followed up on any issues that arose in the first interview or on the questionnaire, which required further clarification or explanation.

The third and final interview asked participants to reflect on the meanings they attached to their experiences and was informed by previous interview data. For example, if participants indicated membership in particular student organizations, during this interview I asked them to explain how they understood participation in such organizations influenced their academic success. The overall objective in this interview was for participants to reflect on "how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present experiences" (Seidman, 2005, p. 13).

Focus Group Interviews

In addition to individual interviews, each participant was asked to partake in at least one focus group interview. Focus groups, which had four participants in one and six in the other, lasted approximately 90 minutes and were audio recorded. The focus groups were used to further explore patterns found in the questionnaires and individual interview sessions and to allow participants to collectively examine their meaning making and experiences around factors that enabled them to persist and to be successful in college. Thus, participants had an opportunity to interact and build on each other's ideas.

Questionnaires

Participants were asked to complete a paper questionnaire after the first interview was concluded. The questionnaire contained 18 items and took 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Questionnaires were used to collect data on: (1) demographic information; (2) participants' schooling contexts; and, (3) the institutional/community resources participants had access to and used. The information gleaned from the questionnaires provided me with further insight into participants' schooling experiences and was also used to inform the interview and focus group questions.

Artifact Analysis

I collected and analyzed 3 participant-selected artifacts, which they felt represented their academic achievements (i.e., final papers, grade reports, certificates of achievement, photographs). This number permitted some variety in choice for the participants without creating a burden. No original artifacts were kept, but with permission, photographs were taken. Artifacts were used to uncover participants' understandings of academic achievement, which was further explored in the individual and focus group interviews.

Data Analysis

As interviews were completed, I sent the audio files to TranscriptionLive, a professional transcription service, to have the files transcribed into text files. I read each of the interview transcripts while listening to the audio to ensure accuracy. To analyze the data collected during the research study, I used various coding strategies that were organized around the research sub-questions and themes derived from the conceptual framework. As Saldana (2009) describes, a code is a "word or short phrase that

symbolically assigns a cumulative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3) and coding allows the researcher "to organize and group [similar] data into categories or "families" because they share some characteristic" (p. 8). I used a three step coding process that included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Merriam, 2009).

I began with open coding, which was both deductive and inductive. As I reviewed both interview and focus group transcripts, words and phrases that were indicative of particular ideas were marked with codes. Next, I reviewed these initial codes and began organizing them into preliminary categories using a technique referred to as axial coding. Axial coding involves identifying relationships that emerge across the data during the open coding process. This was a recursive process where I worked to refine categories that continued to bubble up as patterns cutting across the collected data.

Data collected from focus group interviews was analyzed as the transcripts became available and linked with individual participant interview data for further analysis. This enabled me to explore patterns and themes that emerged from each participant's data as well as among all of the participants. I also used this as an opportunity to compare and contrast individual and focus group interview data to identify any similarities and/or differences. Similar methods of open and axial coding were used to analyze the data from the focus group interviews. Taken together, themes, or "outcome[s] of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection" (Saldana, 2009, p. 13) were determined.

Finally, I recoded the data using the themes, which represented the "central defining aspect[s] of the phenomenon to which all other categories and hypotheses are

related or interconnect" (Merriam, 2009, p. 200). In relationship to these themes, I made suppositions as to how the various categories of data evidenced the ways in which Latino males perceived the factors that contributed to their academic achievement. This included: (1) how participants described and understood their achievement and success; (2) the types of capital that participants accrued and their influence on participants' experiences of success in college; (3) how participants negotiated and transitioned between different contexts and the role of caring relationships in those negotiations.

Researcher Positionality

I identify as a Latino male from a low-income community, and as a first-time college student and, as noted in chapter one, the current research project emerged out of my own experiences and interest in understanding how other Latino males have been able to succeed academically in college. Thus, it was important for me to acknowledge and reflect upon my positionality, beliefs, perspectives, and values (Glesne, 2011; Jones, Torres, & Armino, 2006) as they related to this project.

As a Latino male who conducted a research study with Latino male participants, I was a cultural "insider." Merriam et al., (2001) purport insider status as an advantage for researchers with regards to gaining access, building rapport, asking significant and evocative questions, and reaching empathetic understanding. Indeed, an insider status can help facilitate entrée to a community, but it also presents some challenges, which if gone unchecked, can compromise the trustworthiness of the data collected. For example, given my own experiences, I held particular understandings of the cultural values and expectations to which Latino males are subjected. While this could have helped me to understand the participants' experiences, it could have also impeded my ability to view

the role of cultural values and expectations objectively, which could have also compromised the data analysis and assumptions being drawn.

I recognized that my experiences impacted the entire research process, including my selection of participants, the researcher-participant dynamic during interviews, and my interpretation of the data. To reflect upon the ways that my identity and experiences had influenced the research process, I practiced reflexivity throughout the dissertation process by maintaining a research journal, which I used to reflect upon my assumptions and their potential influence on the research process. Moreover, I used several strategies to cultivate internal validity, or trustworthiness, as described below.

As New York born Puerto Rican and Panamanian, my worldview has been heavily influenced by my Northeastern geographic experience. Thus, my understandings of Latino experiences outside of the Northeast are limited. This had the potential of positioning me as an outsider. As an example, consider an experience I had recently while attending a national Latino conference on the West Coast. The majority of conference attendees were Mexican and Mexican American. During a workshop, all participants were asked to envision that they were a character from *La Loteria* (The Lottery). Everyone, except me, understood what *La Loteria* was and was able to identify a character from the popular Mexican card game that is similar to bingo. This example highlights how subgroup differences can result in gaps in understandings.

Validity

To ensure the validity or "trustworthiness" of this project, I used various strategies suggested by Maxwell (2005). Maxwell (2005) argues, "the main emphasis of a qualitative proposal ought to be on how you will rule out *specific* plausible alternatives

and threats to your interpretations and explanations" (p. 107). In the section below, I outline how I ensured the trustworthiness of the study.

Rich Data: Through three semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, questionnaire and artifact analysis, I obtained detailed and varied data that helped provide "a full and revealing picture of what is going on" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). The data collection processes enabled me to generate rich descriptions of the people, places, conversations, and experiences that had influenced participants' perceptions and successful outcomes in college. Additionally, I was able to look for evidence of my interpretations across multiple forms of data, which enabled me to build a trail of evidence to strengthen my suppositions.

Respondent Validation (member checking): According to Harper & Cole (2012), "Member checking is primarily used in qualitative research methodology and is defined as a quality control process by which a researcher seeks to improve the accuracy, credibility and validity of what has been recorded during a research interview" (p. 510). Once the transcripts were available, I engaged in member checking, by providing each participant with an opportunity to review their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy and clarity. I systematically solicited feedback from research participants about the data collected and the conclusions being drawn from the data. In this way, I ruled out any potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations of participants' accounts. This also provided participants with opportunities for input into the claims I drew from the data collected.

Searching for Discrepant Evidence: As noted earlier, data collected from focus groups was analyzed as an independent source of data and then linked with participant interview

data and analyzed within and across participant interviews. This multifaceted process helped me to uncover any discrepancies in the information collected. The information obtained from questionnaires and artifact analyses were also used to identify any discrepant evidence. I rigorously examined both supporting and discrepant data to "assessed whether it is more plausible to retain or modify the conclusion[s]" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 112) being drawn from the data. Throughout the process, I asked participants to provide feedback on conclusions as a means of checking my own biases and assumptions.

Reflexivity: I practiced reflexivity throughout the study by maintaining a research journal. Through reflective journal writing, I kept a record of and reflected on my presuppositions, choices, experiences, privilege, and actions during the research process. As Ortlipp (2008) suggested, I did attempt to control these assumptions by bracketing them. Rather, I consciously acknowledged them to investigate how they were influencing the research choices throughout the study.

Participant Consent and Confidentiality

I obtained informed and voluntary consent through a consent form written in Standard English prior to the start of the first interview [See Appendix A]. Prior to the start of data collection, each subject received a copy of the consent form to sign. Participants also received a copy of the consent form to retain for their records. I explained the purposes and uses of this research study to all participants. As stated earlier, all forms – including consent forms – were retained in a locked cabinet.

In an effort to ensure that all participants understood the specific points outlined in the consent form, I gave them an opportunity to read it and also verbally summarized it for them. I also reminded them that they could ask questions before, during, or after the

interviews or at any point during the research process. Additionally, participants were provided with my contact information so that they could contact me during and after data collection was completed if they had any questions.

All of the data that was collected in the study was stored in a secured office and on a password protected computer. To help protect participant confidentiality: (1) names were not included in the questionnaire or other collected data; (2) a code was placed on the questionnaire and other collected data; (3) I linked questionnaires to participants through the use of an identification key; and (4) only I had access to the identification key. The identification key will be stored with other collected data for ten years and then destroyed. If an article is written about this research project, pseudonyms will be used when referring to workshop participants, and participant identities will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

Risks & Benefits for Participants

Interview questions could have addressed topics that migh have caused anxiety or uneasiness for participants. This could have occurred, for example, when participants were asked to discuss challenges that they have had to face en route to their degree. The question could have brought up difficult or painful memories, including racism or xenophobia that participants might have encountered inside academic settings. Participants could have also felt uncomfortable with the knowledge that the interview was being recorded. To mitigate uneasiness, each participant was offered the opportunity to refrain from answering any question that he felt uncomfortable discussing, and all participants had the opportunity to review the transcriptions of their interviews. This afforded them the chance to modify any answers that they had given, thereby reducing

the level or risk of stress on their part. Finally, as stated earlier, each subject was informed that he could ask questions throughout the study or withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. As with all research, there was the possibility that the confidentiality of study participants might be compromised. However, data was be securely stored and will be eventually disposed of in accordance with approved IRB procedures in order to minimize this risk.

Although this research was not explicitly designed to benefit participants, it had several potential benefits to the participants. Scholars note the restorative power in allowing marginalized groups to tell their own stories. Delpit (2006) maintains, "We must keep the perspective that people are experts at their own lives…they can be the only authentic chroniclers of their own experiences" (p. 297). Thus, participants may have benefitted from the opportunity to share their stories. Additionally, participants benefitted from participating in the focus groups, which facilitated a community of shared experiences and the development of social capital among the participants. For example, Johnny shared,

> The focus group was really fun actually, getting to meet different people who are also in the same race that I'm in – not just our Hispanic race, but the same little race into getting our careers into someday in the future. They had a lot of wise things to say. I really paid attention to it. I'm not sure if I'm remembering correctly, but most of them took the initiative to find the help that they needed to jumpstart whatever it is they were studying. They actually sought out most of the things, which I have done not as much of – mostly because of my personality, which I don't really go out or ask for help, the pride thing we were talking about.

> After that I just kind of realized that this is a serious moment in our lives, and we have to do whatever it takes to make sure that our future is secure – really, really secure.

Study Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. While I used the "commonly held definition of a traditional college student," Latino males often do not fit the definition of a traditional college student. For example, Latino males often "stop out" to assist the family financially, work more hours to avoid college loans, or start college later. Thus, this study included participants from a particular segment of the Latino male college population. Additionally, although case study allows for the investigation of complex and multiple variables, which can contribute to the development of theory (Merriam, 2009), it limits analysis to specific groups and settings. For example, this study explored the perceptions individuals within a unique population in a specific context. Due to these aspects of the study design and the small sample size, study findings cannot be generalized to Latino male college students, more generally, or to other populations of college students. Lastly, in using the pan-ethnic concept of Hispanic/Latino this study was not specifically designed to capture differences and similarities of experience between Latino subgroups. Further, the small sample size did not permit subgroup comparisons.

Despite these limitations, the study will contribute to the knowledge base on Latino male college experiences. Specifically, this study used multiple sources of data to provide an in depth examination of the factors Latino males identified as contributing to their success. Furthermore, by privileging the voices and experiences of Latino males,

from their own perspectives, this study acknowledged that Latino males are "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002) and much more than cheap and exploitable roadside workers.

Conclusion

This chapter described my epistemological stance and methodological choices. It also provided insight into how data was collected, analyzed, and stored. In addition, I described how my positionality informed this research and how I ensured the study's trustworthiness.

This study sought to understand Latino male college students' perceptions of the factors contributing to their academic achievement in college. In addition, this study pursued an understanding of how various forms of capital, caring relationships, and the ways in which students navigate the multiple environments they encounter influenced their perceptions and their college experiences. The conceptual model, Capital Conceptions/Critical Transitions, helped create boundaries for how the data collected was analyzed, interpreted, and presented. As a result, my hope is that this study will contribute to the dearth of literature on Latino males, and specifically to the body of literature that looks at Latino male college experiences from an asset-based perspective.

CHAPTER FOUR: PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The Latino males in this study provided rich accounts of how their academic perceptions were formed through the influence of family members, teachers and other school-based agents, and the community. Thus, influences on participants' perceptions will be presented in this chapter because that is how participants talked about their perceptions of academic achievement. In this chapter, I offer participants' voices in response to the research questions (1) what factors do Latino males perceive as contributing to their achievement in college?, and (2) how do Latino male college students describe and understand academic achievement?

In the first section, family influences are presented looking specifically at the ways in which fathers, mothers, siblings, and grandparents shaped participants views of and experiences with education. Next, the ways teachers and other school-based adults shaped participants' perceptions and experiences in education are described. Finally, the ways community factors (mentors, the community college, and community-based organizations) affected participants' perceptions are explained. The chapter concludes with a summary of the salient factors that emerged through participants' detailed accounts.

Perceptions of academic achievement

In Latino cultures, family is of significant import. Several scholars have studied the role of family in Latino cultures, using the terms familism or *familismo* to describe a multifaceted cultural tradition that transmits expectations about norms and beliefs within Latino families (Stein et al., 2013; Hartnett & Parrado, 2012; Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Sy & Romero, 2008; Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006). One of the tenets of *familismo* is

the expectation that the needs of the family supersede the needs of the individual (Falicov, 1998; Triandis, 1995). Accordingly, *familismo* is associated with higher levels of loyalty to family (Stein et al., 2013), a sense of obligation to the family's wellbeing (Fuligni, Tseng & Lam, 1999), and specific gender role expectations for men and women within the family structure (Hurtado, Haney, & Hurtado, 2012). Furthermore, the importance of family continues to affect a person through early adulthood, a time when, in U.S. society, individuals are more independent and autonomous (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). For Latinos, enrollment in higher education and its expectations may conflict with the cultural value of *familismo* among immigrant first-generation students, and particularly for the second generation, who were raised in the individualistic oriented U.S. society.

Several scholars have examined the impact of *familismo* on students' academic outcomes (Gonzales, Deardorff, Formoso, Barr & Barrera, 2006; McHale, Updegraff, Kim, & Cansler, 2009; Stein et al., 2013; Smokowski & Bacallao, 2007). The findings vary based on different factors, including but not limited to gender, generational and/or citizenship status, and phenotype. Furthermore, some scholars argue that familism may serve as a form of capital, as articulated in Yosso's (2005) model of community cultural wealth. Stein et al., (2013), for example, noted that it was not surprising that "Latino adolescents who endorse greater levels of familism report fewer negative outcomes including depressive symptoms, behavior problems, and academic difficulties" (p. 2). Still other scholars argue that familism has negative attributes for Latino students. For example, in a study of Latino high school seniors, López Turley (2009) found that Latino students believed it was more important to live at home during college, thereby limiting

the number of selective colleges and universities to which they would apply. Thus research supports the assertion that familism can have both positive and negative effects on Latino students' educational experiences.

Family Impact on Perceptions

For the participants in this study, family was a salient factor that influenced their perceptions of academic achievement. In this study, participants included parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins both in the United States and the participants' home countries as "family." Family members reportedly played varied roles in participants' perceptions of academic achievement and, when examined more closely, a hierarchy of family member role significance related to impact on perceptions emerged. For example, while all participants, with the exception of Chele, referenced both parents most often as influences on their academic perceptions, fathers were discussed more frequently than mothers, even though mothers appeared to have the most direct influence on participants' educational experiences. Mothers were discussed more often than siblings and siblings were discussed more frequently than grandparents and other extended family members. The emergence of a hierarchy of family roles was an interesting observation and of particular significance because it demonstrated the importance of and influence that fathers can have on the successful academic trajectory of the male participants in this study. Additionally, it reflected the divergent ways family members influenced and impacted participants' perceptions and, in some instances, academic decisions and performance.

Parental Influences

Within the family structure, parents reportedly had the most significant impact on participants' perceptions. Parental expectations, which have been well documented as valuable in raising the academic achievement of all students (Mitchell, 2008), are particularly meaningful in Latino families. In their study on immigrant Latino parents, Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese & Garnier (2001) refer to "parental prophecies"—self fulfilling prophecies parents create as a result of their hopes and aspirations for their children—that can be fulfilled by their children's academic achievement. Goldenberg et al. (2001) cite a 1991 Department of Education publication to assert,

> Parental prophecies can be fulfilled by their children's academic achievement in various ways, a correlation documented in many studies, e.g., … students reporting their parents expect them to attain college or advanced degrees are more likely to pass basic achievement tests than students whose parents expect only high school completion (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

The Latino males in this study also repeatedly expressed how parental expectations influenced their perceptions of college and their actually going to college. Flaco shared that his parents always told him he was "gonna go to college." For him, going to college was an expectation. Similarly, J.J. reported he always knew he was going to go to college. In response to when he knew he wanted to go college, he responded, "I think my parents did a really good job of brainwashing me. I can't remember when that was not my thinking." Both Flaco and J.J. are examples of the parental prophecies purported by Goldenberg et al. (2001). Their parents began telling them, at an early age, that they would be going to college. Participants reported that parents routinely and repeatedly

reinforced college-going expectations so that college going became a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (p. 548).

Other participants shared stories from their childhood about their parents valuing and rewarding their academic successes. Marco offered,

> I was brought up believing education was very important. My family believed that. They always rewarded our education or academic success – from first grade, even the littlest thing we did, like winning a spelling bee contest. They always brought it up like it was the highest thing we ever did.

The way in which Marco's family celebrated his educational successes had a lasting impact on his academic perceptions and aspirations. Moreover, Marco repeatedly talked about the influence of his family as a source of support and motivation as he progressed through his educational career.

Pepe, Marco's twin brother, responded similarly in crediting the care and support his parents provided as behaviors that influenced and motivated him to do better academically and persist to college graduation. In Pepe's words,

> When I enrolled in college the support systems is [*sic*] obviously always my family. Always, no matter what, they were there. Whether we were in a bad financial situation or a little bit better my parents always would do whatever it took for me to have everything I needed… They always supported me. They always believed in me. They always - even though sometimes I wouldn't call them and we had weeks where they won't call me—they never get mad at me, which plays an important role in how you deal with everything.

Marco and Pepe's mother and father placed a high value on education and the pursuit of educational success was a family practice. This was evident through their mother and father's commitment to their own continuing education. Consider that Pepe and Marco's family moved to the United States in order for their father to attend the Inter-American Defense College (IADC). IADC is an international educational institution that offers graduate level, multidisciplinary courses to military personnel and government officials (http://www.colegio-id.org/overview.shtml). Additionally, their mother was enrolled in the local community college. They both recounted how they would, parents and children together, spend "family time" completing homework and studying.

The ways in which parents influenced perceptions of education was of importance. For example, Johnny talked about how his parents influenced his perceptions of education, recounting how they motivated him to do well in school. He reported,

> My parents would always have – they would always say – as most parents would say – "You're going to go to college. You're going to be successful. You're a smart kid." All those nice little small compliments. Seeing that in my work throughout the school years, I've really shown that I really am a smart kid, and I can accomplish great things.

Similar to Flaco, J.J., Marco, and Pepe, Johnny's parents had a significant impact on his perceptions of school success. Additionally, Johnny's example reinforces the notion that parents can develop aspirations for their children that can be fulfilled. His parents told him he was a smart kid that was going to be successful and eventually, Johnny, who received mixed messages from his teachers, began to believe his parents.

Andres' educational pathway was distinct from other participants. His parents valued education and exposed him to college as a toddler, when he would attend college classes with his mother. His family placed a high value on education and they engaged in practices, e.g., sending Andres to an expensive private American school located in Bolivia, making him deliver his school tuition payments, and encouraging him to explore his academic interests, that reflected their commitment to Andres' academic development. Once he graduated high school, his parents continued to support his academic exploration. Consequently, he attended two colleges and one community college, all in the United States, before graduating with an Associate's degree.

Andres' parents placed a high value on education, but he reported that they did not insist on "perfect grades." Reviewing Andres' comments, it seems as though his parents allowed him to use school as a sandbox—a place to where he could explore his interests and discover what he was passionate about. This undoubtedly influenced his perceptions of academic achievement. He stated,

> I guess to me being academically successful means that—I guess I can use my own life as an example. I could have gone to school for four years and done journalism…But if I was not able to apply what I learned in school towards getting a job, towards accomplishing other goals that I had, then I feel like that is being—that would have been a failure. And I'd say academic success is what I've been able to do now, which is the fact that I've taken what I've learned and it's a useful tool.

Like several of the other participants, Andres' parents influenced his perceptions of academic success. Additionally, looking across the participants' accounts, it is

particularly interesting to observe the different ways parents influenced their perceptions. In the section that follows, the influence fathers had on participants' perceptions are explored more fully.

Fathers

According to Skinner (1961), intergenerational conflict, which should be understood as the conflict between members of older and younger generations, is "often most dramatic" (p. 55) between fathers and sons. Sigmund Freud attributed the clash between fathers and sons to what he later called the Oedipus complex, the universal psychological concept that boys are physically attracted to their mothers and girls are physically attracted to their fathers and this creates clashes for boys with their fathers and girls with their mothers (Armstrong, 1999). Skinner (1961) argues that the Oedipus complex is "valid for certain conflicts within the family…but it is questionable whether one is justified in extrapolating from individual psychology to the study of human society and cultural systems" (p. 55). Since relationships between fathers and sons are social relations, they are thus conditioned by the social structures and cultural systems in which they take place. Therefore, any serious examination of father/son relationships must be investigated against the background of "particular socio-cultural systems" (p. 55). Consequently, to better understand Latino father/son relationships, it is necessary to first understand how the role of the father is constructed in Latino culture.

According to Taylor and Behnke (2005), research on Latino fathers has typically been done by researchers who are cultural outsiders, "who approached research on families from the outside of the families' culture using their own theoretical frameworks" (p. 3). Consequently, early researchers were often ignorant of the cultural biases

embedded in their writing (Mirandé, 1988). Thus, Latino fathers were portrayed as "fighting roosters with terms like "macho," "borracho" (drunk), and "bien gallo" (good rooster) (Taylor & Benke, 2005, p. 3). However, later research began to contest the stereotypical portrayal of fathers as *macho*, demonstrating the complexities of masculinity in Latin American men. Relative to this study and the relationship between fathers and sons, it is important to note that while *machismo* carries negative connotations, there are aspects specific to fathers that are not necessarily negative. Furthermore, while *machismo* has predominated literature on Latino males, it is not the only explanation for understanding Latino masculinity. Arcienega et al. (2008), for instance, offered *caballerismo* as a counterbalance to *machismo*, highlighting the positive behaviors that portray Latino males as "nurturing, family centered, and chivalrous" (p. 29).

The dynamic relationship between Latino fathers and sons must be understood against the cultural backdrop of these gendered expectations among and within Latino culture and families. Historically and culturally, Latino fathers were breadwinners and Latina mothers were caretakers within Latino families. However, immigrant experiences in the U.S. have altered traditional customs Latinos carry with them from their home countries. For example, declining labor opportunities for Latino males and increasing opportunities for women, may have resulted in Latinas becoming family breadwinners (Taylor & Behnke, 2005; Pesquera, 1993; Gutmann, 2003). Scholars suggest this shift has been especially difficult for Latino men because, "the capacity to function as 'breadwinner' seems to be especially important to Latino men" (Félix-Ortiz, Ankney, Brodie, & Rodinsky, 2012, p. 143). The conflict fathers of participants reportedly

experienced because of the shifting gender roles emerged in conversations with participants and may have been the cause of some tension between fathers and sons.

As noted earlier, among family members, fathers were the most frequent subjects discussed by participants. Flaco, for example, described his relationship with his father as one defined by a "father-son dynamic." According to Flaco the father-son dynamic is the conflict all fathers and sons experience as the son starts to step into manhood. The son experiences the conflict because the father, who is the "*macho*" controlling adult, does not want to relinquish control and authority and allow the son to make decisions or behave like the man in the house. The result is the father-son dynamic, which is characterized by conflict and a period of high tension and frustration. The father-son dynamic described by Flaco was present in several of the participants' accounts of their relationships with their fathers and thus impacted both the way participants viewed academic success and their masculinity. Moreover, participants also discussed the clash between the father and son that results from *machismo* and gendered expectations fathers may have of their sons.

Flaco talked a lot about his tense relationship with his father, whom he described as "the stern Spanish father…the head of the house. He's in charge of everything. He's the master of his domain, and everyone must respect him." As Flaco talked more about his father, he recounted that his father had a significant impact on his life. He described the tension between him and his dad,

> I know my dad kind of grew up without a dad, which is kind of a stereotypical thing, too – or sort of like *machista* sort of stuff. I feel like my dad has this egotistical thing, where he doesn't like me as the son trying to flex power over

> him by not doing what he says. But that's not why I don't do what he says. I don't do it because I feel like it's kind of hypocritical. I tell him all the time "I appreciate the fact that you give me a place to stay, and you provide food and all this stuff. But at the end of the day, I can't be in here all the time. I can't just be here and not do anything else. It's going to drive me crazy." As a Latino male, it kind of does give me this thing where I have to sort of like puff up my chest to my dad and demand respect from my dad. At the same time, he does the sort of like stern father, stern Spanish father thing, which looking ahead I don't really think is what I would want to be like, as much as him. I'd like to care as much as him, because I'm assuming he does that out of place of caring, but I feel like I wouldn't want to make everything about worrying, because it just seems like a lot of worrying.

Flaco's story made clear the tension that existed between him and his father. It also seemed that Flaco's investment in his academic success was directly connected to the father-son dynamic because Flaco sought ways to gain his father's respect and to he reportedly did that through his academics. Thus, Flaco was motivated by the conflict with his father, which resulted in his successful college achievement.

J.J. also experienced a lot of tension with his father, which affected his perceptions of academic success. To appreciate J.J.'s father-son dynamic, it's important to have a picture of his childhood. J.J. grew up in Panama, where he "was expected to be one of the smartest kids in the class because his [older] siblings were." J.J. met this expectation, achieving the second highest grades in his class throughout his elementary school years. As a result, he "felt like a smart kid." But, when his family relocated to the

United States at the age of 13, he "felt pretty dumb because [he] didn't speak the [English] language." Consequently, he worked very hard in English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes and mastered English quickly. But, J.J. recounted that as a child, his parents were always working and as the youngest of three children, and a decade apart from his other two siblings, he did not grow up feeling close to his family. His relationship with his father was especially difficult. J.J. believed his father was physically present, but emotionally absent. As a result, J.J. shared that he yearned for a more authentically grounded caring relationship with his father.

Another important aspect of J.J.'s father-son dynamic is related to J.J.'s identity as a gay male and his father's role as a Pentecostal minister. According to J.J., he and his father have "very different worldviews." As a result, there is a great deal of tension between them, which contributes to their strained relationship. Fortunately, J.J. reported being aware that despite the absence of affection, his father loves and cares for him. J.J shared, "He's [his father] not a very expressive person so I can't point to one of his actions, but I know he does [love me]. It's a given. I just wish he would like, show it." J.J. sought his father's approval, and his academic performance was one way he hoped to receive it. But his father was not able to demonstrate his pride of his sons' accomplishments. J.J. shared his frustration,

> He [his father] said he's proud of me like, twice in my whole adult life. Like, I don't remember what for but like, I was getting awards and like, he was not saying anything. And like my aunt asked him if he was proud of me and he was like, "You know, all…" Here's the other thing. He – my parents, because of their worldview credit my success to God, like, I think it's a big part of it but I've also

> done some stuff. So that's always a little…it irks me a little bit but yes, you're not giving me credit to the fact that I've been working hard. So I don't, like the times when he's said he's proud of me it's been like, really in passing. Like, "Hey, I'm heading out but I'm proud of you." Like, it's not meaningful and that would've been nice.

His father's recognition of his accomplishments was important to him and when his father could not provide it, J.J. found approval from a male mentor, who he describes as one of his mentor-parents. J.J. reportedly coined the phrase mentor-parents to illustrate the way his mentors became his academic parents. According to J.J., because his parents had very little knowledge of college in the U.S. they were unable to provide him with the guidance and direction he needed. As a result, he relied on his mentor-parents when he needed advice or support relative to College.

Mateo's relationship with his father was somewhat different than Flaco and J.J. Whereas Flaco and J.J. appeared to have power struggles with their fathers, Mateo's challenges seemed to be more about identity development and personal acceptance. Mateo's father believed that Mateo needed to "act" more "like a man," despite Mateo reportedly identifying as a heterosexual male. Mateo attributed this to his high-pitched voice and feminine character traits. In one of our interviews, he recounted a story of his father telling him he needed to "*habla como hombre"* (talk like a man). In Mateo's words,

> My dad is always telling me if I speak with my natural voice, how I actually want to sound like – I'll be like "Hey, papi …" You instantly hear that difference. He's

like “Talk like a man.” He mocks me. And then says “Como hombre.” I’m like “Sorry.” He’s like “That’s better.”

As a result, Mateo reported forcing himself to talk in a manner that strained his voice and required him to seek medical attention. Fortunately, he did not experience any significant damage to his vocal chords, but this story provides insight into how his father impacted his behavior and perceptions. It also reflects the strong *machismo* that exists in Latino cultures and the gendered expectations placed upon Latino males by their fathers.

Mateo also recalled stories of trying to do things in an attempt to satisfy his dad. For example, he was not ever really interested in soccer, but he remembered playing the sport to please his dad. He reported,

> I tried so hard to be interested in soccer, but just no. I think one great example of me not being interested in soccer was one time – we were playing a really important game. This is like 7 years old or 10 years old. I’m playing defense, and this little ladybug comes onto my hand. I was more fascinated by the ladybug than the team that was coming toward me. My dad was yelling from the sidelines “…[Mateo]! It’s right there!” And I’m there like “Hi, look at the ladybug. Huh? Oh. Whoops.” Before I could react, they were already ahead of me. I was actually put backward. I fell on my back. I looked up and I was like “Can I get some help here?” They were like “Okay.” I look at my dad and he’s like…[Mateo made a facial expression and a physical gesture signifying his interpretation of his father’s disappointment].

The interactions Mateo had with his father demonstrated the strong cultural value his father placed on “acting like a man,” behaviors that align with prevailing perceptions of

machismo. Furthermore, the interactions shaped Mateo's perceptions of expected male behaviors. Relative to academic achievement, Mateo stated that his father instilled in him the importance of prioritizing his schoolwork over other things. He remembered his father's words, "homework first, fun later," and shared how that stayed with him when he started college. In fact, in response to whether he identified as an academically successful student he replied, "Now I do…because I listened to my dad."

J.J. and Flaco provided examples of father-son relationships that were characterized by challenges and conflict, but several participants recounted positive stories about their fathers and how their father-son relationships shaped their perceptions of academic achievement. Andres referred to his father as one of his best friends. He shared many stories of how his father taught him to value education. While a student in Bolivia and from kindergarten until high school graduation, Andres attended the American Cooperative School (ACS), an expensive private school with an enrollment of approximately 300 students who are the children of diplomats and other government officials (acslp.org). Andres's parents were adamant about him attending this school because they wanted him to learn English, and at ACS all instruction occurred in English. While attending ACS, Andres' father would make him submit the check to pay the tuition. Andres explained,

> My dad used to make me pay my own tuition. He used to—he'd go here's the money, go pay your tuition. And I asked him later on, I was like, you know, did you do that so I'd be like, you know what, my parents are working their asses off to put me through this school. So he said, yeah, absolutely. He's like I wanted you to know that it's expensive like basically we work so that we can pay for that

> school. And that's one thing my parents always said, and I don't think they did so, you know, like you know what, we're wasting all our money. It's just so that I would value.

The physical act of turning in the tuition money contributed to Andres learning to value education. But, he also began to look at education with a critical lens. Being aware of how hard his parents worked to pay for his tuition made Andres think more critically about the quality of his education. Reflecting on his experiences at ACS, Andres reported feeling angry because aside from his ability to speak English fluently, he did not believe there were any other benefits to attending the school. This experience reportedly had a lasting impact on Andres' future academic experiences.

After high school, Andres attended two colleges and one university. Throughout each experience, he remained in close contact with his dad, who would Skype with him and end each conversation with, "I love you. Learn, learn, learn. Whatever it is about, just learn as much as you can." The words resonated with him and he reported doing just that—learning as much as he could from each experience. From Andres' stories, it is clear that his father played a critical role in his perceptions of academic achievement and helped to shape how Andres viewed and valued education.

Similar to Andres, Junior also reported having a very positive relationship with his father. Throughout his interviews, his father came up most frequently, likely because his father also served as his mentor. Junior's father is a master electrician and Junior aspires to follow in his father's footsteps. To learn the trade hands-on, Junior attends college at night and works alongside his father during the day. When describing his support system, Junior offered,

> Support systems—basically just the books—that's where I get everything from and my dad, he, you know since my dad is an electrician, I don't know if I told you that but he acts like basically my second professor you know like I go home and whatever I have in class that didn't make sense I will go home and ask my dad. He makes it clear for me so the internet, my books, and my dad.

It is clear from Junior's conversations that he looks up to his father and views his father as one of his teachers. Additionally, it is evident that his father makes sure Junior knows he is cared for. Through their daily interactions, Junior learns about the profession, but also learns how to value learning and the importance of prioritizing school. He shared a conversation he had with his father, where his father reminded him that he did not have to work. His father wanted him to focus on going to school, so Junior reported making sure to balance work and school. Furthermore, when things get difficult, he prioritizes school over work. This is one of the perquisites he enjoys since he works alongside his father. In one of my memos about Junior I noted,

> Junior's close relationship with his father is quite beautiful. It is clear, just from listening to him share his story, how his father has shaped his perceptions of family, school, work, and life. It's interesting too, because as he talks about his father, he seems to be very protective. For example, when he was talking about applying to colleges, he did not want it to appear as if his father was not helpful, so he made sure to include that his father drove him to campus.

The role fathers played in the Latino male participants' perceptions of academic achievement were somewhat of a surprise to me, likely because of my own experiences growing up without a father. Although some participants expressed father-son conflict,

all of the participants acknowledged the importance of their father's contributions to their school success and academic performance. Moreover, fathers also served as role models for participants, like Junior and Johnny, who both aspired to be like their fathers when they grew up. Of the patriarchs in his life, Johnny offered,

> Obviously I dream to be the kind of man my dad and my grandfather were. They were awfully kind, generous. They would help out in any way they can. I take that to heart because I in turn try to do that with everyone I meet.

Johnny's comments are profound and were mirrored by many of the participants, who spoke lovingly of their fathers as role models. And for those participants that did not agree with some of their father's *macho* behaviors, like Flaco and Mateo, they acknowledged that they would not emulate those behaviors, but that they would still want to be the "kind of dad" their fathers were.

Mothers

Mothers were the second most referenced members of the family to reportedly impact participants' perceptions of academic achievement. However, the manner in which participants spoke about their mothers was distinct from the ways in which they spoke of their fathers. Mothers appeared to be more nurturing and, with the exception of Chele, whose mother abandoned him, no participant reported having a conflict with his mother. In fact, when discussing gender roles in Latino families, Jon described the mother as the nurturer, which was validated by other participants during both of the focus groups, when several participants discussed their mothers as nurturers and caregivers.

Additionally, participants appeared to be deeply caring of their mothers. Flaco, for instance, referenced his frustration with his father because of how his father treated his

mother. His father had expectations of his mother, i.e., have the food on the table, laundry done, and house cleaned, etc., that Flaco believed was part of the cultural gender expectations of women. He reported not liking the cultural expectations, but especially not appreciating the way his father would talk to his mother. Thus, when his father would demand something of his mother, Flaco would encourage his father to say "please" and "thank you."

Mateo exhibited care for his mother, too, but in a very different way. He wanted to achieve success in order to "take care" of his mother. He talked about how hard his mother had to work to pay for his college education and the responsibility he felt to her as a result. He said,

> I want to not only get good grades to show her that her money wasn't wasted on nothing, but I want to pay her back for everything. It's going to take a while, but I'm going to pay her back. I don't care how long it's going to take me because she has done so much for me. My role as the person being cared for would just feel incomplete or unjust if I didn't do something back for her.

Other participants echoed Mateo's sense of obligation to his mother when they discussed the responsibility they have to their mothers because of the care and sacrifice their mothers have made for them. Moreover, Mateo's comments speak to how his mother has influenced his perceptions of academic achievement and motivation to be academically successful. He views good grades as a vehicle to long-term financial security, which will ultimately provide him an opportunity to pay his mother back for all she has done for him.

Marco and Pepe's mother influenced their perceptions of academic achievement because she served as a model for the family. Marco recalled how his mother enrolled in the local community college when the family migrated to the United States from Peru. He remembered how his mother "set the example" and would check in on him and his siblings regularly to ensure they were on track in school. The significance of Marco and Pepe's mother attending community college was made clear when it was time for them to apply for colleges, and she encouraged them to apply for scholarships and grants. Unlike many immigrant parents, their mother had experienced college in the United States and was able to help them investigate ways to fund college, which served as a form of familial and navigational capital that Marco and Pepe were able to leverage when it was time for them to pursue college admission.

When Johnny was in the fourth grade, he had a very painful experience with his fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Sherling. During a parent-teacher conference, Mrs. Sherling told Johnny's mother that Johnny wouldn't make it far if he did not "shape up." She went on to say that he would have trouble in middle school, high school, and "enormous trouble in college." This upset Johnny's mom and was a defining academic moment for him. Johnny recounted how his relationship with his mother seemed to be different after the talk with Mrs. Sherling. He attributed this to the fact that he had an academically successful sister and his mother, who he described as a "Christian mom," would get upset with him because she knew he could be academically successful, too. Still, after Johnny moved out of the fourth grade, he struggled in middle school. It seemed as though he was living up to Mrs. Sherling's warnings. Then, one day in middle school, when Johnny was in the sixth grade, his mom sat him down and told him "you are going to make it to

college." Johnny recalled how his mother's disposition was positive and as a result of the conversation, he said, "I started to believe her so I started cleaning up my act and started doing better." Although Johnny "did not get straight A's" he started improving academically after his "mom started being more positive." By the time Johnny reached high school, he was a thriving student who enrolled in and successfully completed several Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Johnny's experience with Mrs. Sherling was rather compelling and the subject of one of my post interview memos, where I wrote:

> When Johnny talks about his parents and his sister and how they influenced his academic experiences, he lights up! In his words and expressions, it is clear that he cherishes his parents and his academic success appears to be, at least in part, an attempt to honor them. I was moved when he talked about his fourth grade experience with Mrs. Sherling and how his mother reacted. Johnny recounted the story with teary eyes and said two things that are worth exploring further and paying closer attention to in his interviews and interviews with other participants. First, he said, "I just never want to disappoint my parents." On the surface, this sounded like a normal reaction for someone reflecting on a painful childhood memory. But it also seemed to have a motivating effect on Johnny that could have been a factor that contributed to his academic success. I will continue to look for this *fear of disappointment* and see if it emerges with him or other participants in the study. Second, he said, "The one thing I don't want to do is upset my parents. They did so much to try to get to this country." This comment was of significance because I have heard it expressed in different ways by other participants. It is also

> worth exploring participants' *sense of obligation to their parents* as a factor that contributes to their academic success, too.

Johnny's story highlighted how important his family was to his educational success, but it also centered his mother as an important influence on his perceptions of his success. In a later interview, he revisited the story of Mrs. Sherling and his mother's reaction. He shared,

> As I mentioned before, my fourth-grade teacher – that little confrontation my mom and my teacher had. Obviously it took me down to start, but in time I used that to empower me and to do better – to show that I am capable of graduating moving onto bigger things. The change in personality of my mom when she used to instead of give positive words, she used to be a bit more negative about my schoolwork and whatnot. Thanks to God and religion, her positive words have kept up and seeped into me in which I believe every word that she says, and I know that I can do more.

Johnny's comments make clear that his experience with Ms. Sherling did, in fact, have a motivating effect on him. His story also educes Goldenberg et al.'s (2001) work on parental prophecies and the aspirations parents have for their children. Johnny reportedly had academic difficulties in the immediate years after his experience with Mrs. Sherling. He recounted how upset his mother was during his fifth and sixth grade years and how that impacted his academic performance. By the seventh grade, his mother was able to move past what Johnny described as "her negative attitude." She made a decision that Johnny would make it to college and started "being more positive about my academic ability." As a result, Johnny "believed her" and "started cleaning up his act." His seventh

grade was a turning point. Although he did not receive straight A's, it was the first time he had done well academically. In the eighth grade, he continued to improve and by the time he reached high school he was enrolling in AP courses and doing well academically. Goldenberg et al. (2001) contend that students' achievement levels can be "improved by improving family attitudes toward schooling" (p. 548) and Johnny's experience confirms their assertion.

According to Andres, his mom was also a significant factor in his perceptions of academic achievement. He reported that his mother had him when she was 19 years old and as a result she had to put her career on hold. Referring to his mother as one of his best friends, Andres spoke of his childhood fondly, stating that he and his mother "sort of grew up together because my mom used to take me to classes and she was 19." He also stated that going to school with his mother as a child influenced his perceptions of school. He indicated that his mother valued education and she also instilled that in him. When he started school, it was his mother who insisted he attend the American Collective School so that he would learn English just as well as he did Spanish. Thus, Andres' mother shaped both his perceptions of school and his school experiences. These influences reportedly allowed Andres to feel comfortable taking academic risks that ultimately resulted in his successful completion of an Associate's degree.

Junior also talked about his mother's influence on his academic achievement. As a child, he did not have college aspirations; he wanted to be a professional athlete. His mother supported his dreams, but encouraged him to attend college, too. He recalled,

> What I wanted to do wasn't like going to college. I wanted to be a professional soccer player or baseball player but yeah my mom, you know I always told my

> mom that I wanted to do that but she say that you still got to go college because you don't know because that happens like you don't know if that is going to happen or not. You work for it and then if it happens then you know but she say that you know you got to go to college... That's when I found out I want to go to college.

Like other participants, Junior's mom developed college-going expectations that resulted in him ultimately deciding to attend to college. However, she also left room for the possibility that he could one day be a professional athlete, thereby nurturing his aspirations. Furthermore, she provided him with college as an alternative back-up plan to consider. Like many of the other participants mothers, Junior's mother developed parental aspirations for her son that align with Goldenberg et al.'s (2001) theory of parental prophesies.

J.J., on the other hand, shared that his mother "didn't really do a lot in terms of actually helping me get to college, but she always ingrained in me that I had to go to college." Thus, over two interviews, J.J. referenced his mother instilling in him the need to go to college and to get an education. As an immigrant parent, J.J. shared that his mother didn't really understand the United States college application and admissions process. Consequently, she could not help him with college applications and the college-going process. But, that did not hamper her insistence on him going to college.

As a result of his mother's college-going expectations and a lot of hard work and perseverance on J.J.'s part, he was able to successfully graduate from a four-year college in 2014. In reference to receiving his Bachelor's Degree, he reported,

> I definitely feel a sense of accomplishment, but also just looking back at how hard it's been and how many people like me don't have the opportunity to get to that point. It's a little bit of accountability and guilt that comes at that. But I'm so proud of it. I'm still going frame it in my mom's living room once it's here.

From his comments, it is clear that he worked hard to achieve his success, but that he also wants to honor his mother, who had such an important impact on his college-going aspirations.

Jon's mother also had aspirations for him to attend college. He recounted how he had no intentions of pursuing a college education until his mother insisted that he do so. He attributed this to the fact that his mother understood the importance of having an education. When he was born, his mother was 18 years old and was forced to drop out of high school. Eventually, she was able earn the equivalent of a GED while living in Brazil. His mother valued education and made every effort to instill in her children its importance. Jon reported that his mother expected him to do well in school (and work) as a way to serve as an example for his younger brother. He offered,

> My mom is definitely always trying to get me to do a lot better so I can set the example for my brother. Even though he's not gonna wanna [*sic*] go to school now. He's taking a year off. She still wants me to set the example for him about not just school but also work because I'm working a lot. And he has yet to get a job even though he already graduated. And she's kinda getting me to be the example for him just so he knows how to do it.

Like other participants' mothers, Jon's mother had expectations that Jon would attend college, although he was the only participant that expressed that one of his mother's

motivations for him to pursue a college education was to serve as a role model for his younger brother. Other participants, however, expressed feeling a sense of responsibility to their siblings, regardless of their birth order, to do well academically.

Siblings

While there is a plethora of literature on Latino family influences on academic outcomes, there is a dearth of research on the impact siblings have on each other's academic perceptions and outcomes. Within the limited research in this area, a 2013 study of Mexican-American youth explored the extent to which sibling caretaking might promote or hinder personal and school success (East & Hamill, 2013). While the study also explored the influence of mothers' gendered-role attitudes, of significance to this study was the finding that "frequent sibling caretaking was related to higher educational aspirations" (p. 542). Similarly, McAllister (2012) found that parents and older siblings had the greatest influence on Latino students during the predisposition to college stage. The idea of sibling caretaking emerged with several of the participants, and like East and Hamill's (2013) findings, the siblings reportedly had higher educational aspirations as well as favorable academic outcomes. Interestingly, literature on sibling care-taking and "sibship" suggest contradictory evidence about the influence of siblings on educational aspirations and outcomes (Powell & Steelman, 1990). Yet, for participants in this study, siblings appeared to play an important and positive role in both their perceptions of academic achievement as well as their actual academic performance.

Marco and Pepe, twin brother participants, each reported how important they were to one another's success. Marco found that having a twin brother offered him a

"built in buddy system" that served to motivate him and "push him academically." He offered,

> My twin brother and I helped each other a lot. I had always somebody I could practice English with. We could do homework together, and we could go to school together. We both played soccer together, so we both pushed each other. We knew that if we didn't get good grades, we couldn't play. For him, it was a little bit harder because I guess he's not as into school as me. But I always pushed him to work hard, too, because I wanted to play with him. I wanted him to be there with me. I think it was very important to have that – almost like a buddy system. There's this one person who you can rely on each other to do well, and that was very important for us – especially I think very important to him, too, because he wasn't getting good grades sometimes.

Marco's relationship with his brother Pepe, coupled with his desire to play soccer, helped motivate him to pursue good grades and to help his brother do the same. His comments also illuminated the sibling responsibility he shared with Pepe. He encouraged Pepe to do well academically so that Pepe could also continue to play soccer.

Pepe reported that Marco's support of him was the reason for his academic success. Pepe was not as committed to his academics as Marco and reported having very little interest in homework or studying. Instead, he was more focused on soccer, but in order to play, he had to maintain good grades. Thus, he was motivated by his desire to play soccer. He was also "pushed" by his brother and attributed part of his success to his brother's influence. As a result of his brother's guidance and mentoring, Pepe developed a desire "to learn," which ultimately resulted in him applying himself academically and

doing well. During the focus group, Pepe shared a compelling story of how his brother supported him and his success. He said,

> Actually, somebody that really cared for me…was my brother. He would go and delete my 3-page essay that I had wrote in 3 days. And I'm like what are you doing? And he was like, "No, this is bad." And sometimes I felt like slapping him because I was like are you kidding me, I just worked very hard for this, thinking I was writing a book. Thinking that I was Shakespeare writing. But, no! He saw that it was not right what I was doing. He saw that I needed help. So he sat next to me and said, "you know, think about this, think about that"…I'm like, "alright, you just want to write my essay, man?" But he never did. I hated that, because you know we always want the easy stuff, but you know, there's, it takes somebody to push you and to say you like easy...no, you're not gonna get easy with me. I'm gonna push you. I don't care if we stay here until 3 a.m., we're gonna do this.

Pepe's story demonstrates the significant impact his brother had on his academic journey. It also speaks to the way siblings can support one another while in school by using tough love and not accepting mediocre work.

Both Marco and Pepe reported feeling a sense of sibling responsibility that also extended to their younger brother, Juan, who was born with Down Syndrome. When they spoke of Juan, independently and together, I could sense their deep adoration and love for him. During each of their respective interviews, Marco and Pepe spoke of their brother's challenges in school because of the language barrier (Spanish was the first language spoke at home) and the cognitive and behavioral deficits associated with his condition. From their stories, it was evident that they both cared deeply for him and ensured that he

also had every opportunity to be successful in school. Marco recounted how watching his little brother struggle in school academically and behaviorally was difficult for him. As the older brother, he reported the desire to "protect him [Juan] from other kids and teachers." Over time, Marco was able to see changes in his brother, which Marco attributed to Juan's learning English and playing soccer. He shared that in middle school his brother "matured a lot…and learned all these things," and by high school he believed Juan was "so smart…He's doing math. He's reading. He's always studying every day. It's incredible!"

Pepe, on the other hand, talked about his brother's perseverance as a motivator. He reflected that watching Juan overcome obstacles and accomplish the unexpected helped him to realize "that really nothing's impossible and that it all depends on you, how much you want it and how much you're willing to sacrifice and do in order to accomplish it." In sum, the brotherly bond that exists between Marco and Pepe, the way they care about and for their younger brother Juan, and the model Juan provided of perseverance despite uncontrollable obstacles all served as evidence of the significant role siblings can play in helping each other achieve academic success.

Johnny is the younger sibling of an academically successful sister. He reported that his sister impacted his perceptions of academic achievement because she was always academically successful and he wanted to be on par with her, if not better. He referred to it as friendly competition, although he acknowledged that his sister always won. But, he also reported relying on his sister for guidance and support. He believed his sister was "on the ball," suggesting that she had her act together. As a result, he relied on his sister to help him with things like scholarships and certain school assignments. Johnny's

accounts of his relationship and interactions with his sister demonstrated, like Marco and Pepe, the significance of his sister's influence on his academic achievement. For example, he shared how the two of them would study together while in college. He jokingly offered, "we would study together at same time so it was kind of like two great minds working together, two Hispanic minds working together might I add!" He appreciated his sister's intelligence and tapped into her academic competence to facilitate his academic success.

Andres is the oldest of three boys and he talked about how difficult it is to be the oldest sibling because of having to "set the example" for his younger brothers. He recounted how his brothers observed him as a lazy student when he was in middle and high school. As a result, they did not heed his advice when he would talk to them about applying themselves in school. His brothers' reactions changed when he started doing well in college. He reported that "they started taking me more seriously" because he obtained his Associate's degree and was on his way to completing another. Andres' story is of import. It suggests that siblings can impact one another's perceptions of academic achievement positively and negatively. According to Andres, at first his siblings did not see him as a positive role model. However, eventually that changed and Andres was able to help his brothers appreciate the importance of doing well in school. As a result, Andres shared that his brothers have improved grades and are looking into applying for college.

Jon also had a younger brother, although he did not talk about him frequently. He did, however, select his younger brother's high school graduation picture as one of the artifacts that represented his academic achievement. He shared that he chose his brother's graduation picture because he believed he inspired his brother to graduate. Recall that

Jon's mother had expectations he would serve as a role model for his brother. Jon took this expectation seriously and reported several attempts he made to both advise and mentor his brother. Although he was not certain that he contributed to his brother's high school graduation, it was clear that serving as a role model for his brother was a significant factor in his own academic achievement.

Grandparents

Participants discussed extended family members the least frequently compared to parents and siblings. Grandparents were discussed by three of the participants, but each one referenced the influences grandparents had on their academic achievement differently. Andres' grandfather, an economics professor at a university in Bolivia, was included as a significant influence on his academic experiences. His grandfather provided both encouragement and tangible support to pursue his interests. He encouraged Andres to enroll in college and when that did not suit Andres' interests, he urged him to move to Santa Cruz, another city in Bolivia, where a family friend owned an auto repair shop and Andres could work. According to Andres, this was particularly significant for him because he followed his grandfather's advice and discovered that he loved working on cars. Consequently, Andres received his Associate's Degree in automotive technology and, at the time this dissertation was being written, was in the process of completing coursework to also receive his Associate's Degree in Business Management, with the goal of opening his own auto repair shop. Like Andres's parents, his grandfather fostered opportunities for him to explore his interests, without the fear of disappointing his family. Andres offered that having this flexibility and openness was one of the reasons why he was able to successfully complete his degree.

In Latino families, there is a cultural expectation that children will take care of their parents as they age, thus it is not it is not uncommon for grandparents to move into their children's homes creating larger extended family networks with multiple generations under one roof. In Flaco's family, his grandparents did, in fact, move into his mother and father's home and were the source of ongoing family conflict. He reported that his parents fought a lot because his father's mother came to live with them from El Salvador. In Flaco's words, his grandmother "is not awful or anything. She just has her own way of thinking. My father always protects her. And then I have my mother who just wants to be in charge of her house." He recounted how his mother would take issue with something his grandmother did. His grandmother would then say something to his father, who in turn would say something to his mother, which would result in a cycle of ongoing conflict. This was all exacerbated in 2010 when his maternal grandmother moved in, too, after his maternal grandfather passed away. As a result, Flaco made every effort to avoid being home. Consequently, he spent a lot more time at school and work. According to Flaco, this negative home experience positively impacted his academic achievement. Spending more time at the college campus resulted in him dedicating more time to his studies and raising his grade point average. Thus, while his grandparents did not impact his perceptions of academic achievement directly through an intentional action or intervention, the multigenerational chaos had the unintended positive outcome of increasing Flaco's GPA and his overall academic outcomes.

Johnny reflected on how his grandmother influenced his academic achievement. He recalled taking road trips with his mother and grandmother. As his mother would drive past cars, his grandmother would add up the numbers on the license plates,

remembering the total from one and adding it to another. She would do this until they reached their final destination. Johnny attributed his love of math and numbers to this experience and shared how surprised he was that his grandmother was able to add numbers so quickly. He said, "I was like wow! Just wow, I didn't even think my grandma could do this, but yeah. We are all pretty smart now that I think about it."

The stories shared by Andres, Flaco, and Johnny paint portraits of the positive influence grandparents were able to play in these participants' academic experiences. While some participants discussed other family members, such as aunts, uncles, and cousins, they were not included here because three or more of the participants did not discuss them.

In this section, the significant role family played in participants' perceptions was presented. Beginning with parents and then looking more closely at fathers and mothers separately followed by siblings and then grandparents, participants were able to elucidate the different ways family members have influenced their perceptions of and experiences with academic achievement. For example, some participants spoke about the father-son conflict that motivated them to prove they were men, which they reportedly attempted to do by excelling academically. While this might seem like a harsh way to motivate one to succeed, it aligns with literature on "tough love" (Carter, 2005; Conchas, 2006) and "critical care" (Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006). Additionally, some participants demonstrated the potential benefits of sibling caretaking, despite research suggesting otherwise. Thus the findings in this study depart from the extant literature suggesting that *familismo* negatively impacts Latino student achievement (Portes, 1998; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Ream, 2003). On the contrary, the

results of this study support Desmond and López Turley's (2009) assertion that, "there is not enough evidence to conclude precisely how familism affects Hispanic students' performance and attainment…however, there is certainly enough evidence to conclude that this topic deserves further investigation" (p. 315).

School-based Influences: K-12 & College

In this section, participants reflect on how schools, through K-12 teachers and college professors, coaches, and counselors, influenced their perceptions of academic achievement. When examining the factors that influence and/or contribute to Latino male academic achievement in college, it is impossible to ignore school structures and how they foster or hinder participants' academic achievements. For these young men, the way they articulated the impact of schooling was through discussions about teachers[6] and other school-based adults (coaches and counselors) whom I refer to as institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Thus, in the section that follows, participants reveal how interactions with institutional agents, specifically teachers and other school-based adults helped shape their perceptions of academic achievement. Stanton-Salazar (2010) defines an institutional agent as,

> An individual who occupies one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high-status and authority. Such an individual, situated in an adolescent's social network, manifests his or her potential role as an institutional agent, when, on behalf of the adolescent, he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the

[6] For the purposes of this study, the use of the word *teacher(s)* refers to those individuals directly instructing students in both K-12 and college. However, when participants are making references to college professors or K-12 teachers, it will be noted. All K-12 teachers and college professors possess pseudonyms to safeguard their identities and the identities of the participants.

> transmission of, highly valued resources (e.g., high school course requirements for admission to four-year universities) (p. 5).

This study employs Stanton-Salazar's definition of an institutional agent to explicate the ways in which participants' perceived teachers, counselors, and coaches as influences on their academic achievement.

K-12 Teachers

There is a considerable body of research that examines effective K-12 teaching practices for Latino students. The same is not true of college teaching, although a small body of literature has begun to emerge (Saavedra & Saavedra, 2007; Pappamihiel & Moreno, 2011). When participants spoke of the influences teachers had on their experiences, they distinguished between K-12 and college, although they used the words teacher and professor interchangeably. Thus, how K-12 teachers and college professors influenced participants' educational experiences will be address separately, beginning with K-12 teachers.

According to a review of literature by Huerta and Brittain (2010), successful teachers who work with Latino students are "(a) highly interactive, (b) student-centered, and (c) collaborative" (p. 382). Additionally, based on the literature, effective teachers possess common attitudes and beliefs that include, "(a) high expectations of students, (b) the need to incorporate students' linguistic and cultural resources into the curricula, (c) an emphasis on strong literacy skills, and (d) valuing and incorporating parental involvement" (p. 385). The characteristics that emerged in the literature are consistent with culturally responsive teaching. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive teachers engage students' cultural knowledge, experiences, and ways of knowing.

Culturally responsive teachers also adjust their teaching so that teaching is collaborative and the power in the classroom is shared (Ladson Billings, 1995, 1998; Gay, 2010). For Latino students, in particular, teachers must be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic conflicts that arise for students who come from predominantly non-native English speaking homes. Participants referenced teachers in this study who possessed many of the aforementioned characteristics. Thus, the section is organized thematically, highlighting participants' voices as they reflect on the ways in which teachers influenced their perceptions of academic success as well as their educational experiences.

For the Latino males in this study, K-12 teachers were of significance to their later academic achievement in college. Several participants noted how teachers played a critical role in their academic lives, fostering academic confidence and college going aspirations. Marco, for example, talked about his high school English teacher, Ms. Coi. According to Marco, Ms. Coi would be a main character in his college going story. She "changed my perspective on education for college from high school" because she recognized his individual potential and saw him as more than an "A or C or E student. She just wanted me to try my best and she knew that my best was better than an A on paper."

Marco was enrolled in Ms. Coi's English 10 class, which he found very challenging. As a non-native English speaker, Marco talked about the struggles he had with writing. Ms. Coi was able to help him overcome many of his writing obstacles and develop confidence in his academic ability. Marco shared,

> I took her regular English 10 class one quarter and it was challenging for me, but her kindness and interactive style of teaching made me want to learn. Learning is

> the key word here. She saw that I had a strong desire to learn and she saw that it was especially difficult for me…She believed in me and she told me that because she believed in me and I put the effort in learning, she would recommend me to be in her honors class next quarter. I didn't think I could do it. But she told me, "Don't worry. I want you to stay in my class." I told her "But I'm not going to be able to get even a C, I think. I think I'm not going to do well." She told me "I don't care what grade you get. I just want you to be in my class. I want you to try your best. I'm not going to let you fail, but I can't promise I'm going to give you an A. You need to work hard." This was an important moment in my life because I realized that if I tried my best, the grade didn't matter, I would be successful regardless because I would learn and learning everyday became my purpose in life since that moment. It was very important to have somebody that believed in me and believed in the potential of the individual rather than on the scores that he or she gets. She was great.

Ms. Coi imparted a very important lesson to Marco—academic success is more than a good grade. Marco carried this lesson with him in his future courses and stated that he developed a love of learning that moved beyond Ms. Coi's classes.

Ms. Coi also helped Marco realize his full potential. She didn't give up on him or allow him to become a classroom wallflower. She engaged him in the learning process and let him know that she believed in him. Moreover, Marco reported that she was not easy on him. Over the three years that she taught him, she made it clear that she had high expectations of him and that he would have to earn his grades. As an institutional agent, she leveraged her power in support of Marco and provided him with access to her honors

course. Marco did not believe he was prepared for an honors course, but Ms. Coi believed in him, gave him the opportunity, the necessary support, and cultivated his self-confidence, allowing him to invest the time and energy that ultimately resulted in his successfully completing AP literature. Marco's reflection on his experience with Ms. Coi demonstrates the lasting impact she had on his academic success and trajectory. Marco said,

> I really learned a lot. I was in class with native students with strong reading, writing, and speaking abilities – I was presenting in front of them. They probably had trouble understanding what I had to say. I didn't care. She believed in me, always looking at me with a smile, always positive, and that really helped me overcome those barriers – social barriers or even just the material that we went over. Once I finished high school, I went to college, and I got an A in English 101. Since I gave my best and put in the work, I was able to get an A. I've been getting A's in college for the longest time now.

Marco concluded talking about Ms. Coi by sharing what he described as one of the most important lessons he learned from her. According to Marco, Ms. Coi taught him "the best teachers are the ones who are trained to recognize their students individual potential and guide them towards it." He said he used that lesson to gauge all other teachers he encountered. Based on Marco's comments, it is evident that Ms. Coi cared about him and served as an institutional agent in his academic life. She leveraged her authority as his teacher, helped him cultivate the confidence and skills necessary to achieve success, and then provided him with an opportunity to practically realize his academic ability.

K-12 teachers were often described as caring and nurturing. For example, Flaco also spoke of "Wendy," his high school English teacher, who left an indelible mark on his high school experience. He shared,

> She was actually an older white woman. Her name was Wendy. I don't know what it was. She was just very nurturing to all the ideas that I had. And she was just a very open-minded teacher. I really wish I knew what it was about her. But she was just very nurturing as a teacher. She didn't talk at you. The whole philosophy of the school was Socratic method of teaching. So everything was gonna kinda turn into a discussion. She was always very willing to hear everything. She was just a very nice woman with a nice disposition and all that stuff. She helped me a lot. She was my English teacher. And one day she let me know that I got the best grade in the class on some paper that I wrote on The Great Gatsby. She was asking me how I thought up this whole idea for the paper. I couldn't answer her 'cause I don't think I even remember what I wrote on the paper. I just kinda went for it. We had other projects that we would do. She would just be there to help. She was very nurturing. She was probably my biggest resource – I guess, teacher.

According to Flaco, because of Wendy's nurturing disposition she became one of his biggest resources. He expanded on how Wendy served as a support to him. For one of her class essay assignments, Flaco wrote about his father's coming to the U.S. from El Salvador. He recalled how she helped him build on his work to develop a piece of writing that made him proud. He also reported that Wendy viewed her students as individuals and

not as "carbon copies of one another," which is how he felt some other teachers viewed students. He shared,

> Teachers like Wendy were understanding that maybe not all students are carbon copies of one another, and they need different things. She was very willing to just I guess understand the situation. Once she understood that, she would help you build off of whatever it was. For example, I always had that trouble at home that I talked about. Then I ended up writing a short essay about my father's trip to El Salvador – from El Salvador coming here and crossing the border and all that stuff. Just building off what I know and what kind of distinguished me from the people around me. When you're kind of made into an individual in that respect, it kind of makes you feel special—that they [teachers] care about you. It was pretty introspective the way she allowed me to build and build my work in the class.

Wendy's teaching style and caring and nurturing manner resonated with Flaco. Consequently, Flaco reported changing his perceptions of teachers and how they could potentially impact students' lives.

Not all K-12 teachers were described as caring or nurturing, yet some still had a significant influence, and not always positive, on participants' experiences. Mrs. Sherling, the fourth grade teacher who told Johnny's mother that if he didn't "get his act together" he would not get very far and certainly "not make it to college," significantly impacted his academic experiences. Mrs. Sherling's comments negatively affected Johnny's perceptions of school and contributed, at least in part, to his low academic performance in fifth and sixth grade. Thus, it is evident that teachers can also have an adverse effect on students and potentially hamper their academic confidence and

outcomes. Fortunately, Johnny's mother mediated the adverse impact Mrs. Sherling had on his academic confidence by rebuilding his confidence and encouraging him to see himself as an academically successful student.

K-12 teachers who had a positive impact on participants' experiences were described as caring and nurturing. Moreover, participants also discussed how K-12 teachers fostered their academic confidence and college-going aspirations, which contributed to their aspirational resource development. Yet, through Johnny's story about Mrs. Sherling it is evident that K-12 teachers can also perpetuate negative self-perceptions and adversely impact their students' academic experiences and outcomes. Furthermore, this observation affirms a finding in the care section that addresses the importance of caring professors "minding" their words so as not to adversely impact students and their educational trajectories.

College Professors

Saavedra and Saavedra (2007), in their research on strategies that work with Latino college students, found that instructor behaviors, which include immediacy, clarity, humor, dramatic and relaxed communication, and the use of narratives, are all critical aspects of building a caring classroom climate that fosters Latino student success. Junior's comments on his college professor, Mr. Harding, affirm Saavedra and Saavedra's (2007) claims. Junior appreciated the "extra things" Mr. Harding did for his students—"he taught the subject so people can understand…he always laughed…he always joked around with the class…and every month he used to buy pizza for us, you know he just always did that little extra thing." Junior offered that because of Mr. Harding, he knew he could be successful in college. When I probed more, to better

understand how Mr. Harding helped him understand this, he shared, "He used examples that are real…He also always made sure we were not afraid to ask questions…He took time to learn how to say our names...He told us stories about himself. You know, it was like we could connect with him. He made it easy for me to go ask questions." Mr. Harding employed many of the characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher. Based on Junior's reflections, Mr. Harding also employed immediacy, clarity, humor, and relaxed communication, the instructor behaviors referenced by Saavedra and Saavedra (2007) as successful with Latino college students. As a result, it appears he was able to have a favorable impact on Junior's perception of professors and the ways in which he would interact with them in the future.

Several participants also discussed how different professors helped them overcome non-academic challenges and obstacles that could have potentially interrupted or derailed their academic achievement. For example, Flaco shared that when he was preparing to transfer, he encountered a financial hold on his account for $1200.00. The hold would have prevented him from transferring because the college policy did not allow for his records (transcripts, grades, etc.) to be released if he owed an outstanding balance. He did not know what to do and so he turned to Ms. Houser, a professor, who was also the head of the theater department, he had worked with over several semesters. Ms. Houser was able to tap into institutional resources and secure a grant for Flaco, which covered the outstanding balance. Flaco was surprised and appreciative of Ms. Houser's assistance. When he talked with her, he didn't expect her to "find me help. I talked with her because I needed someone to talk to and I didn't want to talk with my parents about it because I knew they couldn't afford to help me." Ms. Houser, in her role

as an institutional agent, helped Flaco overcome a financial and an institutional barrier that would have stalled his ability to transfer.

Johnny also spoke about Dr. Boykins, his college psychology professor, who, unbeknownst to Johnny, served as an institutional agent on his behalf. Johnny described Dr. Boykin's class as a difficult course. He recalled Dr. Boykins telling the class that he expected 60% of the class to fail the first exam. When Johnny failed, his self-esteemed plummeted, but not for long! He reportedly "shook off the failure," evaluated his study habits, made some adjustments, and prepared for the next exam. He read more carefully, took more detailed notes, paid attention in class, relied on his sister's notes from a psychology class she was taking at the same time, but with a different professor, and studied with his sister. As a result he did well on the second exam, but not as well on the third. Working closely with the Dr. Boykins, he completed some extra credit assignments and completed the course with an A. More importantly, he came to understand that academic success is not necessarily reflected in a high grade on an exam.

Johnny shared this story to highlight the rigor of Dr. Boykins course and to acknowledge that Dr. Boykins made himself accessible to his students. Following the course, Dr. Boykins met with Johnny to discuss his academic plans and future aspirations. He advised Johnny on courses necessary to transfer and then followed up with him during the summer to discuss transfer options and encouraged Johnny to meet with him when classes resumed in the fall to devise a transfer plan. Dr. Boykins served as an institutional agent for Johnny, helping him to understand the rigors of college coursework, while helping to facilitate his transfer plans. This had a significant impact on Johnny's academic achievement and helped him better understand the transfer process.

Mateo talked about the impact Professor Holmes, his American Sign Language (ASL) instructor, had on his academic achievement. He recalled,

> I've had many conversations with her [Professor Holmes] outside of class, and I can tell that she has this liking for me. I asked her – I didn't understand in the first place, "Why are you so hard on me? Why do you say these things to me?" She's like "Because I am trying to push you. I know I see the potential in you. You have that patience. You have a drive to be the interpreter, the ideal interpreter that we need today. I can tell you're still afraid to go into places that involve risk-taking. I'm trying to push you as hard as I can to go to those places where you're uncomfortable. That's what you need to be. When I push you, it is out of the goodness of my heart because I know for fact that you can get there."

For Mateo, Professor Holmes' pushing motivated him. It also helped that she articulated her belief in his abilities and potential. He reported that her belief in him helped him to build his own confidence and to continue striving to master ASL.

Marco observed that there were differences in the ways K-12 teachers and college professors cultivated educational aspirations in him. He stated,

> When I came here in high school, I actually remember a teacher describing me as very studious and as a good person, more than a good student. I became friends of my teachers. I did well in class, but they liked that I talked to them. I asked them about how their day was going. That's the kind of person I am. And then in college, teachers don't really praise you as much. That's fine because it's not like I need it. But then some teachers tell me – I had a teacher here [community college] who told me "You're a very interesting person." I took a lot of classes

> with him – "and a really good student." He told me "Once you graduate, come back, and I will try to find your job here is a professor." That meant a lot to me… That was a great thing for him to say to me. I always keep that in the back of my mind, and I think he sees potential in me.

Marco's observation was rather astute. I also observed differences in the ways participants spoke about their interactions with K-12 teachers and college professors. Whereas K-12 teachers appeared to be nurturing, cultivating participants' aspirational development and interpersonal growth, participants did not describe professors as nurturers. However, this should not imply that college professors did not exhibit care for participants. On the contrary, college professors did engage in caring relationships with participants, yet the care they exhibited was also reportedly different from K-12 teachers. K-12 teachers purportedly spent more time building participants' academic confidence, helping them see possibilities within themselves. College professors appeared to approach work with participants collaboratively, having discussions about discipline specific career opportunities and life beyond the confines of the institution. The observable differences in the ways participants' K-12 teachers and college professors engaged with them may be, at least in part, due to the differences in participants' maturity levels and social and cognitive development. Nevertheless, acknowledging these differences is significant when examining how K-12 teachers and college professors influenced participants' educational trajectories and experiences.

Summary

Presented thus far are the ways K-12 teachers and college professors, serving as institutional agents, were able to impact the academic achievement of participants in this

study. Teachers, employing strategies that align with culturally responsive pedagogy, were able to (a) help participants negotiate institutional structures and potential barriers to their academic achievement, (b) foster academic confidence in participants, and (c) promote future academic possibilities that participants may not have originally considered. In the next section, participants reveal how school based adults influenced their perceptions of academic achievement.

Other School-Based Adults as Institutional Agents

The section that follows reveals how other school-based personnel, specifically coaches and counselors, influenced participants' perceptions of academic achievement in college. Two participants referenced each of the institutional agents presented here. Thus, taken independently, each would have seemed like an isolated factor, but collectively, they represented a group of adults that significantly impacted participants' perceptions of academic achievement as well as their actual academic outcomes.

Coaches

In 2001, Barajas and Pierce conducted a study that explored the gendered pathways male and female Latino students pursue to achieve academic success. They found that males pursued academic success very differently than their female counterparts. Whereas females developed and leveraged cultural and social capital through cultural translators (the use of mentors as a way of translating between two cultures, i.e., dominant White culture and Latino culture), males used athletics and sports to develop a significantly different gendered pathway to their academic success. Two participants in this study, twin brothers Marco and Pepe, also relied on sports as a pathway to achieve their success. In a post interview memo, I struggled with whether

playing soccer or participants' interactions with coaches were the factor that influenced their academic achievement in college. I wrote,

> Playing soccer seems to motivate Pepe and Marco to pursue good grades. They both shared that in order to play, they had to get and "keep up good grades." Marco took this very seriously and commented that he would do whatever he had to do to play—including keeping up good grades. Pepe shared similar sentiments. Clearly, playing soccer is a motivator, but both of them also talked about the lessons they have learned through soccer, which comes from their interactions with the coaches and their teammates. If I had to compare this to school, I would say soccer might be the classroom and the coach might be the teacher. I wonder if they see it the same way. I will explore this more fully with the participants, but I am inclined to pursue coaches as sources of support given that coaches are the individuals that can yield capital and, perhaps, provide players with opportunities to experience caring relationships.

Thus, while sports in general could be viewed as a factor that contributed to the academic achievement of Latino male participants, in this section, I emphasize the influence of coaches on participants' perceptions of academic achievement.

In this study, soccer coaches were meaningful to several participants, but two of the participants, Marco and Pepe, repeatedly mentioned soccer coaches as significant in their academic lives. Each was deeply committed to playing soccer and looked at their coaches as role models. Pepe was clear about the role his coaches played in his perceptions of academic achievement. He noted that along with his family, coaches were a key component of his academic support system. He said, "they [coaches] believe in me

and pushed me on and off the field. They never let me fall behind and taught me to study as hard as I played." He also referenced the skills, behaviors and attitudes toward school and studying his coaches refined in him, which he was able to carry off of the field and into the classroom. He said, "I learned to be committed, to be a leader, and to be responsible. I also learned to study and to ask for help when I needed it." Pepe went on to talk about the value his coaches placed on education and how that translated into him developing a balanced perspective on playing soccer and pursuing his Bachelor's degree.

When it came time for Pepe to transfer from the community college, he relied on coaches for guidance and assistance. As the captain of the soccer team, several four-year institutions courted him, offering him financial incentives to attend. He reviewed each offer with his coaches and, although he reported making the final decision, he said, "thanks to God my coaches knew about the type of schools they were and were able to help guide me. The good thing is that my coaches know me and know what school would work for me. That helped me a lot." From Pepe's comments, it is clear that his coaches were able to serve as institutional agents on his behalf by leveraging their knowledge to help negotiate the selection process for transfer to a four-year institution. When he transferred, Pepe had considered pursuing soccer professionally. His coaches supported the idea, but urged him to complete his Bachelor's degree first, which he did.

Marco shared similar stories about the way coaches impacted his perceptions of academic achievement. However, Marco noted one particular coach, Hugo, who "took a very active role" in supporting him. Hugo was his coach when he was in high school. Marco spoke of Hugo's attitude and disposition and the high expectations he placed on him and how it all helped him remain focused. He said, "When I had trouble, he was

there to help. But, he didn't force his help. He was tough, man. He was a tough coach, but he really cared. He really wanted me to be successful and that kept me focused on my success." After high school, Marco attended the local community college, where he also played soccer. However, he remained in close contact with Hugo. When it was time for Marco to transfer to a four-year institution, Hugo helped him obtain a scholarship to attend a four-year university. Unfortunately, because of Marco's undocumented status he was not able to afford the tuition, even with the scholarship. Consequently, he attended a different four-year university that did not have a soccer team. Marco saw this as an opportunity and with Hugo's guidance he started a soccer club. Additionally, Hugo, who believed in Marco's talents, helped him obtain a job as one of the high school soccer coaches. Marco shared, "Hugo, he was the one who wanted me to be there [at the high school]. When I was there, he took a very active role in showing me how to do everything and helping me whenever I couldn't be there or I had trouble. He did a lot for me." Hugo took a very active role in Marco's academic life by helping Marco negotiate obstacles and find ways to still play the sport he so loved.

For Pepe and Marco, coaches served as institutional agents that helped them negotiate institutional processes. However, coaches also reinforced the importance of studying and doing well academically. Given the numerous media stories of university-level coaches foregoing academic integrity, Marco and Pepe's high school and community college level coaches offer a positive counternarrative.

Counselors

For the purposes of this study, counselors include those individuals who serve in counseling departments and those serving in an academic counseling and/or advising

capacity. Counselors are well positioned to serve as institutional agents for students across the educational pipeline. According to González (2013), counselors, along with teachers and other school-based personnel, can help mediate difficulties Latino students have in accessing higher education and achieving success. For two participants, counselors played a significant role in their academic lives.

J.J. reported that when he attended community college, he was "spoiled." His counselor became a significant part of his support system and he grew comfortable with her. He shared,

> I got to see a counselor at least once a week – mainly because I got really close to her, to them actually. It got to the point where because I did so many things outside of college that I was really stressed all the time. I felt really comfortable with her so I could just walk in whenever I was feeling really stressed, and she would make me hot chocolate. We would talk about life. That really worked well for me because I always felt grounded. But transferring to [University], I didn't have that at [University]. It was really difficult for me to navigate attempts at school because I had an advisor who was really nice, but we didn't connect in the same way I connected with the counselors at [Community College]. They didn't understand my struggle the same way that they did here [at the Community College]. That's one of the things I really wish would have been better.

J.J.'s relationship with his counselor helped him manage the stress that resulted from his very active life as a student and an activist. As he noted, the counselor provided him with support that helped him feel "grounded." It also intimates the types of supports students might need in order to be persist to completion. J.J.'s description of his relationship with

his counselor at the community college reflects one of authentic caring. The open door policy that enabled him to "walk in whenever" he was feeling really stressed and the physical act of the counselor making him hot chocolate all point to caring behaviors that "really worked" for him and may work for other students as well. While J.J.'s experience may be specific to the relationship he established with his counselor, it is still ripe with examples of the types of behaviors that foster student connectedness, sense of belonging, and care—all well documented contributors to student persistence and academic achievement. Unfortunately, he reported not having the same support when he transferred to a four-year institution.

J.J.'s counselor also encouraged him to pursue opportunities that positioned him to make meaningful connections with high-level college leaders. Each year, the governor appoints one student to serve on the board of the community college J.J. attended. At the encouragement of his counselor, J.J. applied and was appointed to serve as the student member of the board of trustees. Reflecting on the experience, J.J. shared,

> I really am proud of my service here at the college on the Board of Trustees – mainly because that was one of those things that my counselor was like "You need to do this. Apply, apply, apply." I remember feeling really unworthy because I looked at the advisor and everyone else that was on the board. I was like "I don't belong here. This is not something that people like me do." The fact that the governor appointed me to the board and I love this institution and I got to give back in a way that was unique to me really means a lot to me.

Based on J.J.'s comments it seems he lacked the self-confidence to pursue the opportunity to serve on the Board of Trustees on his own. Thus, had it not been for his

counselor encouraging him to pursue this opportunity, the likelihood is he would not have done so. His counselor assumed the role of an institutional agent and helped J.J. gain access to an opportunity that both impacted his access to capital and influenced his self-perceptions of what he could do.

Pepe talked about the role M.E. Hughes (pseudonym), his academic advisor at Pilgrim College (pseudonym), played in his academic achievement once he transferred from community college. He recounted how, over two years, Ms. Hughes encouraged his personal, academic, and professional interests. Pepe offered,

> I would notice she would care because she would constantly be there emailing me whether it was summer or not, whether I had her for two or one class or not one class. She'll be, oh, there's this opportunity here. I know you're looking for internships. Look there is this. There is that…She's really going outside the box and wanting to make it easier for me, to try to help me, to try to show me…I do not need to struggle…We would have talks and she would be willing to stay after class, before class, whenever it was. She would tell me, "just stop by my office." So she really showed me that -- and she has a lot of other students. She has a lot of things to deal with. A lot of health problems too with her knees and everything and she was still there…and she definitely made me feel like she was proud of me.

Pepe went on to describe Ms. Hughes as one of the people who motivated him to be the best in college. He spoke fondly of Ms. Hughes and credited her, along with his family and soccer coaches, as being a part of his college support system.

Based on J.J. and Pepe's comments, counselors can and do play an important role in the academic lives and perceptions of the students they counsel. J.J. and Pepe's counselors provided them with the necessary nurturing and support for them to pursue opportunities that enriched their college experiences and allowed them to experience successes outside of the classroom. This helped to broaden their perceptions of academic success, as evidenced by a comment made by J.J. He stated,

> To be honest, the importance or the stress over academic success has decreased the more involvement I've done in my community. When I was the first couple years here in the US, I wanted to get a 4.0 all the time. That's how I defined academic success. But as I found more meaningful things to do – not that getting good grades is not a meaningful thing. It really is. But I found a lot more meaning in being involved in my community and doing community service. To me academic success became less about having the actual 4.0 and more about having a good enough grade and being able to do all these amazing things with my community.

Community Factors: Mentors, Community College, and Community-Based Organizations

The three Community factors—mentors, community college, and community-based organizations—discussed in this section reportedly impacted participants' perceptions of academic achievement. Interestingly, each of the community factors presented in the next section could have been represented as school factors, but they are presented here under the umbrella of community factors because participants discussed them during conversations germane to community engagement and support.

Mentors

Mentoring Latino students following their entry into college has been proven an effective tool to help them persist to graduation (Noguera, Hurtado & Ferguson, 2012; Torres & Hernandez, 2009; Zalquett & Lopez, 2006; Hall, 2006; Laden, 2000). Noguera, Hurtado & Ferguson (2012) argue, "Young Latino men would benefit significantly from increased mentoring accompanied by strategic scaffolding throughout the educational pipeline" (p. 308). Moreover, in a 2005 study of mentoring and first year Latina/o college students, Bordes and Arredondo found that just having a mentor made a difference for the Latino participants in their study. Likewise, for some of the participants in this study, mentors reportedly played a significant role in their perceptions of academic achievement and throughout their educational trajectories.

Chele referred to his mentor as one of the most important people in his life. According to him, his mentor is like his grandfather. Recall, Chele migrated to the United States illegally and on his own when he was thirteen years old. He met his mentor several years later through a community program and, as luck would have it, his mentor was also an affiliate faculty with the local community college. At the time of the study, Chele had known his mentor for three years. He shared,

> My mentor cares about me because he's been there whenever I needed him to be. He's not just my mentor. He's like my best friend. I see him like my dad, like my grandfather because I have my father. But my father is in my home country. Every time I feel frustrated or have a problem, I go to him [his mentor].

Chele indicated that his mentor has helped with and number of college processes, including enrolling in the community college, course registration, and the financial aid

process. Furthermore, Chele reported viewing his mentor as his support system in the United States. When he has academic difficulties, he talks with his professors, but then follows up with his mentor. If his mentor cannot help, because he either doesn't understand the subject matter or is not available, then Chele will seek assistance from tutors in the academic support centers.

Based on Chele's comments, it seems his relationship with his mentor was different than the relationship other participants had with mentors. I believe this was because of the time Chele took to build trust with his mentor. As a result of Chele's challenging childhood and tumultous adolescence he reported being distrusting of adult authority figures. Thus, when he met his mentor, he was very guarded. Yet, his mentor invested the necessary time in building trust with Chele so that Chele began to see him as a figurative "grandfather." Thus, Chele reportedly relied on his mentor for advice on all aspects of his life, from academics to relationships. He believed his mentor had an important understanding of the "American system, the educational system" and that his mentor was "guiding me toward my goal." Thus, it seemed Chele relied heavily on his mentor and his mentor appeared to make himself available to support Chele's needs.

J.J. met his two "mentor-parents," Maria and Rick, when he was hired to work for Maria's non-profit organization. He articulated that he didn't have to worry about the motives of his mentor-parents because based on their interactions he knew they only wanted what was best for him. When he transferred from community college to a four-year college, he experienced some financial difficulties and was going to stop out of school and work to save for tuition. He discussed it with his mentor-parents, who advised him against stopping out, which was sound advice given that research demonstrates that

students who stop out are less likely to return and persist to graduation (Topper, 2009; Fein, 2013). When they discovered he was having financial difficulties paying for school, they discussed it and provided him with a check to pay his tuition so he could return to school in the fall. Thus, because of his mentor-parents' support, J.J. was able to continue his studies without interruption.

J.J. developed a very close relationship with his mentors, but an especially close relationship with Rick. It seemed that Rick filled the void that J.J. experienced with his father, whom J.J. had described as unaffectionate. J.J. shared,

> In so many ways he's [Rick] more of a father to me than my own dad. Like, we – he cooks for me and he asks me about life, and gives me advice. Like, whenever I have an issue I call him and I'm like, "Hey, I'm dealing with this. What can I do?" And it's not like he said – he's said he loves me a few time but it's not him saying that but it's him talking about – like, showing he cares about me and like, he wants me to be okay. And it's not just merely monetary. It's emotional and physical.

Maria and Rick provided J.J. with the emotional, financial, and physical support he needed in order to be successful academically. Rick, in particular, was also able to help J.J. experience love and affection from a male paternal figure. Consequently, J.J. credits his relationship with his mentor-parents as one of the major contributors to his academic success. He also acknowledges that he has a responsibility to them as well, to be the very best person he can be and to demonstrate to them that their investment in him was not in vain.

Mateo considered his ASL teacher, Professor Holmes, his mentor. He described Professor Holmes as witty and sarcastic. He shared a story about how she motivated him to continue developing his ASL skills. Mateo reported that as a deaf person Ms. Holmes was very blunt. He attributed this to deaf culture and stated that he appreciated that characteristic in her. One day when he was talking about his transfer intentions, he informed her that he wanted to attend Gallaudet University, a prestigious school for the deaf and hard of hearing, to continue learning ASL. Professor Holmes replied, "You don't go there to learn ASL. You go there already knowing ASL, already ready to practice what your major's going to be." Reflecting on her comments, Mateo shared, "Her being the way that she is has kind of prepared me for how I should expect things to be at Gallaudet. I would have to say that [Ms. Holmes] has been the most important mentor in my college success so far." Mateo also commented that he recognized the significance of his relationship with Ms. Holmes and valued her wisdom and advice.

Ms. Holmes represents the evolving role faculty can play in the lives of students. Mateo first met her as a student in one of her beginning ASL classes, but their relationship continued beyond the course and she eventually shifted from professor and became his mentor. This evolution was only possible because both parties agreed to a change in their relationship. Of significance, perhaps, is the fact that Professor Holmes and Mateo were able to establish such a relationship and rapport because of their initial interaction as faculty member and student. As a result, Ms. Holmes established a strong mentor role in Mateo's life and helped him negotiate important considerations (i.e., Gallaudet University) for his future.

Community College

Although not a part of the study's initial design, all of the participants attended the same community college. Community college emerged as a common theme and a significant factor in participants' academic achievement. Community colleges are well documented as the preferred entry point to higher education for Latino students and especially for Latino males (Vasquez-Urias, 2014; Adelman, 2005; Chavez, 2008; Kurlaender, 2006). However, according to Sáenz et al. (2013), "despite the growing educational gap between male and female Latina/o students, only recently have researchers focused specifically on male community college students" (p. 83). Researchers have attributed the high enrollment of Latino males in community college to several factors, including close proximity to home, affordability, access to vocational programs and technical training, and flexible scheduling (Sáenz, Bukowski, Lu, & Rodriguez, 2013; Fry, 2004). For the participants in this study, the community college provided access to several capital yielding networks. Furthermore, the community college provided participants with alternative pathways through the higher education pipeline, including traditional academic programs, honors programs, and vocational programs as well as an array of extracurricular activities, i.e., soccer, theater, and student government.

There were three primary reasons why participants attended community college. First, some participants planned to attend the community college as a cost savings measure. They had every intention of transferring to a four-year institution after they completed the necessary prerequisites for a Bachelor's degree at the community college. Johnny, for example, shared that he planned to attend community college immediately

following high school. Second, some participants attended the community college because although they were accepted to four-year institutions, they could not afford the tuition. Some of the participants in this category encountered challenges as a result of their documentation status. Third, some participants decided to attend the community college because of the programs offered. Andres and Junior, for example, attended because the institution was one of the only ones in the geographic area to offer the types of programs they wanted to study (i.e., automotive technology; electrical engineering).

Pepe believed his experience in community college prepared him to move on to a four-year institution. He recalled his first semester at the community college, when he felt that college was "like an extension of high school." He felt this way because he didn't realize that college required a different commitment to working independently in order to achieve success. However, that changed quickly when in his first semester, he received a "low GPA of 2.3." Pepe shared that when he started at the community college "It was a lot to take in for my first experience in college and I wasn't aware of what I was dealing with…. So it was just me walking into something completely different and new and of course … I had to face up to some consequences … I didn't do that good in my first semester." But, with the help of his brother, his family, and the resources provided by the community college, he was able to raise his grades by the time he was ready to transfer. Furthermore, he reportedly learned that community college was not an extension of high school. Pepe offered,

> I didn't want to do homework. So that was kind of like a big wake up call for me, especially since I had my brother who was doing better than me in school -- we can say that. I was very outstanding in soccer but that's all I was thinking about.

So after that fist GPA that I got, that's been the lowest I've ever got in ever. 2.3, I mean I was eligible to play sports but it really got to me because I knew I wasn't that type of person. I knew my family. It's not about me just, oh, 2.3. You're good. No, I had to do more. So I realized that and that's when my brother helped me too and he pushed me to wanting to learn, to wanting to achieve more and so the second semester began and I started doing better. I passed all of my classes. My first semester I had one A, the rest B's, a couple of C's.

I was so afraid to go into regular English in 101 and write essays. I had never written more than three pages and I knew I had to write five pages in EL101 and I was just so scared in a way. I was so afraid of going to all these classes and having that fear of failure but with help, seeking for help, wanting that help, and being persistent on the things I had to work in I began to learn and I began to acknowledge that help was needed and to acknowledge that I had to be persistent on those things if I wanted to fix them. So there was me just knocking on every professor's door just on the writing center door and getting to know everybody. Can you look at my essay? Can you look at this? What do you recommend? And I started seeing results.

Pepe mentioned several of the resources, which other participants also identified as tools they leveraged for their academic success, such as access to professors and to academic support centers (i.e., Writing Center, Math Center, Science Center, etc.) at the community college as ways he was able to improve his grades. He also referenced the development of help seeking behaviors (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) and self-confidence, two non-cognitive variables that have proven to help students succeed academically (Tracey & Sedlacek,

1985; Ting, 2003; Sedlacek, 2011).

When Pepe transferred to Pilgrim College, he relied on his experiences at the community college to help him start off on the right foot. For example, he knew that he had to work harder to maintain his GPA. He also reportedly knew that he had to understand the institutional resources that would be available to him, which is how he was able to develop a relationship with M.E. Hughes so quickly and easily.

Mateo was encouraged to attend the community college by a college advisor who knew about the college's strong ASL program. After consulting with his mom, Mateo decided to attend. At the time of the study, he had just completed his first year and was excited to return and continue his studies. During that first year, he learned a lot about college and how to manage his course load and assignments. For example, he mentioned,

> Even though I still had the very same laid-back personality, I'm definitely much better about being on top of my stuff now than I was back in high school. I would forget that I had homework in high school. Now knowing that it's college, I'm like "You cannot forget. You cannot forget that you have certain stuff due." And college, it's much more serious. You don't turn something in on the due date, you can't make it up again. In high school, they baby you. I guess because of the change in how they run things in those different circumstances, I changed because I didn't want to fail.

He attributed his successful academic performance in college to the structure of his class schedule. Instead of having classes back to back each day, like in high school, Mateo reportedly appreciated the variation offered by a college schedule.

As a first-generation college student, Mateo did not have a frame of reference for

what to expect as a college student. The opportunity to start his collegiate experience at the community college appears to have benefitted him. Aside from learning how to manage his schedule, he reportedly learned how to identify institutional resources for support, e.g., take advantage of professor's office hours, navigate the financial aid process, and leverage academic support centers to assist him with challenging coursework. He was also able to identify a mentor, who has served as an institutional agent on his behalf.

Chele expressed the extreme difficulty of attending community college full-time and working full-time. He decided to attend community college because it provided the flexible schedule he needed to work and study simultaneously. He knew that working full-time might adversely impact his grades, but because of his need to support himself, he believed he had no other options. To maintain a good GPA, he tries to remain focused by staying away from friends while he is in school. Chele's situation is particularly interesting because as a result of his schedule, he does not take advantage of many of the institutional supports available to him. He did, however, mention that he is aware of the academic support centers, counseling, and library and has no issue seeking help when and if he needs it.

Attending the community college was of benefit to Chele because he needed several remedial courses in order to improve his English and writing skills. Moreover, he needed additional instructional supports, such as tutoring from the academic support center, in order to successfully pass his writing class. Chele reported taking advantage of the tutoring services available through the college. He shared, however, that the tutoring was not beneficial.

> It wasn't helpful because it's kind of awkward because the teacher is telling me one thing, and the tutors are telling me another thing. I'm like – what should I do? I would just follow the teacher.

While his comments provide evidence of his awareness and utilization of institutional resources, it also points to some of the challenges students might face when taking advantage of those resources. Still, of import is the fact that he sought assistance. It was unclear, however, whether he developed help seeking behaviors as a result of his experience at the community college, or if he had possessed the academic confidence and capital associated with help seeking behaviors.

J.J. attended the community college because he was unable to afford tuition at any of the schools to which he had applied and been accepted. When en enrolled at the community, he was offered a set the honors program and receive a full scholarship. As an undocumented student, this was of critical importance to J.J., who struggled financially while in college. Once enrolled, J.J. took advantage of many of the services provided, including counseling, tutoring services, academic advising, and library services. J.J. also became involved in a number of school-organized community-based activities and became a student leader in the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.

J.J. reported that while at the community college he experienced a shift in his perceptions about academic achievement. When he entered college he believed one's GPA represented academic success. As he progressed through the community college, he still recognized the importance of a "good" GPA, but came to believe that his level of involvement with and contributions to his community were more accurate measures of

his success. J.J. attributed the shift in his perceptions of academic achievement to his attending the community college.

J.J. also shared that he believed the community college presented more "challenging" courses than his four-year institution. In response to how he managed a difficult course in college, he shared,

> I don't know if this is a result of the fact that I went through an honors program through college, but when I think of challenging courses I don't think of [Gateway College]. I think of [Community College], particularly the honors program that I went through because we take this capstone course where we are supposed to write this paper about globalization and different – like whatever our interest was. And I don't think – I'm honestly not sure how I got through that class. As part of the honors program you have interdisciplinary courses that basically combine all the different disciplines to be able to write this paper. And I took my capstone course in my second year of college at [Community College], and I was also working on the Dream Act at that time. I was also trying to figure out about transferring schools. I was also coming out to people. So I honestly don't remember much about the academic part of that year…how did I deal with it? I just didn't think about it. I was just like, this just needs to get done. I need to just do it. I don't know. My favorite coping mechanism is denial so that's how I get through life.

J.J.'s comments point to his perception that the community college offered more challenging courses. However, looking more closely at J.J.'s comments, it is not unreasonable to assume that the courses may or may not have appeared to be more

rigorous, but J.J. managed these courses while managing very difficult personal challenges (i.e., the DREAM act work, coming out as a gay man, and the transfer process), which may have influenced his perceptions. Thus, while there may be merit to his assertion, it is important to understand the full context of his comments. Conversely, J.J. did report not feeling well prepared for the social aspects of the transition from Community College to Gateway College. This is not surprising since the Community College is a commuter school.

Community-Based Organizations & School Partnership Programs

According to Osterling and Garza (2004) community-based organizations (CBOs) are "private, non-profit grassroots organizations located in and representative of a significant segment of a community. This umbrella term includes a wide range of organizations of various sizes addressing the social, cultural, health, or humanitarian needs of a particular community by providing their clients with an array of specialized or general services" (p. 271). Scholars have documented the benefits of school partnerships with CBOs serving language minority students (Adger & Locke, 2000; Adger, 2001; Leistyna, 2002). Several participants in this study reported the impact CBOs had on their educational trajectories and higher education decisions. In the section that follows, participants reveal how their interactions with CBOs influenced them.

J.J. was guided to the community college by Hope's Promise (pseudonym), a non-profit organization that runs programs across an urban metropolitan area for low-income, high school immigrant youth. J.J. participated in their after school program. He recalled

> They talk to immigrant youth about the American dream and how to actually have access to it and how to talk to your – how to figure out what the police and

> firefighters do and elected officials in the Board of Education. It was just the crash course in American society. Then they also help you with the college applications and scholarships. When I was applying to the schools that I really wanted to go to, they were like "How about the honors program at [Community College]? I know this is not where you want to go, but this is an option you should consider." So they made me apply, and I'm really glad that they did because that was my only option to go to college.

As a student in the honors program, J.J. received a full scholarship. This freed him of the stress associated working while in college. It also provided him with additional time to get involved in his community while in college.

J.J.'s involvement with CBOs was very different than other participants. While other participants shared similar accounts of a CBO helping them navigate the college application process, J.J. also got involved in CBOs as an intern and an advocate. Through his work with CBOs, he encountered peers who had stalled academic careers because of their community involvement. This was profound for him because it helped him appreciate the need to balance his commitment to service with his commitment to college completion. J.J. also reported being able to appreciate the different types of support he received throughout his academic journey as a result of his work with CBOs.

J.J.'s involvement with CBOs had a significant impact on his future aspirations. Getting involved with a CBO as early as high school helped him feel he was a member of a community. He reported,

> Well it's - there were – I mean, throughout high school that was the only reason why I felt that I was a part of the community because there was a group of adults

> that were significantly interested in my future. I knew it was very clear that they wanted me to succeed; and I felt that if I didn't do that I would let them down.

As J.J.'s comments demonstrate, participation in a CBO helped him feel as if he belonged to a larger community. It also provided a level of motivation for him to "succeed" and resulted in him feeling a sense of obligation to the adults that believed in him. The sense of obligation J.J. feels has emerged in other areas of his (and other participants) comments, particularly when discussing caring adults who invested time and/or resources in his (and other participants') success.

Marco spoke of the impact a CBO had on him when he shared the story behind why he had selected a t-shirt from the Latino College Institute as one of his artifacts to represent his academic achievement. He stated,

> The shirt says [Latino College Institute] and it's not really about the organization. It's more about what it symbolized to me. What they do and what they did for me and then what I've done for them. Like back when I went to the [Latino Student Conference (pseudonym], what I learned there, what they taught me, not just because it was for Hispanic people, but they really made me believe that like, I could go to college, that I could do all these things. They taught me how to fill out a FAFSA and that was something that I don't think nobody else would've taught me if I wouldn't have gone and that was something very important for me. Basically not just what they did for me, but then they gave me all these tools and I volunteered back with them, so in a way, it also symbolizes the effort that I put back into teaching like, the future generations, high school students, how to reach their dreams. It really—that's what it really meant for me and the experience of

> doing that, I mean, it has no measureable like value to how it makes you feel because you do so much for them, like the students, but the way you feel inside when you do it is incredible. It is not—it can't compare to anything.

Marco makes an important point – the importance of the CBO is really what it symbolized for him, and what I suspect it symbolized for J.J.—a belief in his potential and the idea that college was a very real possibility. This was certainly an important message for Marco as a recent immigrant to the United States (his family immigrated to the U.S. when he and his brother were beginning high school). Additionally, as a first-generation college student, Marco benefitted from the guidance provided by staff in the CBO on the college application and admissions processes and the long-term relationship he established with them. It is also important to highlight that Marco self-selected the Hispanic Scholarship Fund's t-shirt as one of the items to represent his academic achievement. Therefore, Marco identifies the CBO as one of the factors that contributed to his academic achievement.

Jon reported the Army Junior Reserve Office Training Corps (JROTC) as a significant factor that impacted his academic achievement. The JROTC falls under the umbrella of school partnership programs and "teaches students character education, student achievement, wellness, leadership, and diversity" (http://www.usarmyjrotc.com/jrotc-program/jrotc-program-information). As a member of the JROTC, Jon reported learning discipline, leadership, and responsibility, which applied to his social and academic experiences. Jon found that JROTC also assisted in developing a more outgoing disposition. He shared that when he started the program in his freshman year of high school he was incredibly shy, but by his senior year he was a

team leader and "in charge of the entire program." He reported having higher self-confidence and being able to talk to anyone without fear. He was able to leverage this self-assurance and approach his instructors and/or classmates to ask for help and as a result, bolster him academically.

In addition to building his self-efficacy, Jon believed the JROTC also helped him determine what he wanted to do professionally. As a result of his participation in the program, he aspired to be a military officer. He knew that in order to be an officer, he needed to attend college.

Junior also benefited from participation in a long-standing community-based organization established in 1968 that works with Latino youth to achieve successful transitions into adulthood. According to Junior,

> I was in that group since I came to this country. I used to play soccer for the group and the group like basically focus on you know just helping you making sure that Latinos they go to college and they do well in life that they stay like out of drugs and alcohol and all that and yeah just a group to see youth like being successful that's basically what it was about [*sic*].

From his comments, it is evident that the CBO helped Junior cultivate the necessary skills to pursue college. It also appears that the CBO, at least in part, helped Junior develop a definition of success, which may have also influenced his college going experiences.

It is also important to note the ways in which participants spoke about non-profit and community-based organizations. Throughout their comments they did not refer to direct program staff or individuals. Instead, they personified the organizations, using phrases like "Hope's Promise helped me…" or "L2C taught me…" suggesting that the

organizations and not people were instrumental in their accrual of capital and their academic experiences. I believe this was more related to the ways in which participants were conditioned to talk about institutional organizations and less about a lack of connection to individuals within the organizations. Nevertheless, it is an observation that may warrant further exploration.

Community-based organizations have played an important role in the experiences of the Latino males in this study. Interestingly, the community-based organizations discussed by participants all shared similar missions—to support the successful integration and advancement of newly arrived Latino youth—with an emphasis on education and civic engagement. Consequently, these community-based organizations helped participants develop social capital and cultural wealth. Furthermore, the community-based organizations also appeared to cultivate non-dominant forms of cultural capital for participants. This matters because through the cultivation of non-dominant cultural capital, participants were able to develop in-group allegiances that helped them develop and preserve a sense of belonging to a group of talented Latinos. Consider, for example, Marco's comment, "It's for Latinos, so you are with a bunch of the best Latino students from Maryland." It is reasonable to assume, then, that when participants who engaged with community-based organizations made connections to "a bunch of the best Latino students in Maryland," they were able to develop social networks that fostered cultural wealth, including aspirational, navigational, social, and perhaps linguistic capital.

Summary

In sum, this chapter uncovered several responses to the research questions, "what factors do Latino males perceive as contributing to their achievement in college?" and "how do Latino male college students describe and understand academic achievement?" Participants discussed their perceptions through the ways in which they were influenced by different social structures, specifically relationships established within their respective families, schools, and communities. Family influences and the role of *familismo* emerged as a salient finding, demonstrating that Latino cultural values play a significant role in the academic experiences of the Latino males n this study. Although fathers were spoken of most often, mothers appeared to have the most direct impact on the educational experiences of the participants. Furthermore, mothers appeared to be the nurturers within the family structure and the genesis of participants' sense of obligation and motivation to succeed.

Within school environments, teachers and college professors emerged as significant influences on participants' perceptions and overall educational experiences. K-12 teachers were described as caring and nurturing and, importantly, helped participants develop academic self-confidence. College professors, on the other hand, were also described as caring, although the care they provided was discussed in the context of helping participants envision their lives after college. This distinction is important as it points to the distinct ways participants' viewed K-12 teachers and college professors influencing their academic experiences. Furthermore, it highlights potential areas for future exploration of the ways in which K-12 teachers and college professors might foster college completion for Latino males.

Coaches and counselors influenced some participants' perceptions outside of the classroom. Importantly, both provided participants with valuable interpersonal tools and skills that were transferrable to their academic endeavors. For example, coaches helped participants develop responsibility and leadership skills. Counselors were noted for helping participants develop strategies to de-stress and cope with the rigors of college. Both coaches and counselors played important roles in participants' perceptions and experiences.

Lastly, community factors, specifically mentors, community college, and community-based organizations, emerged as important contributors to participants' perceptions and experiences. Mentors helped participants emotionally, academically, socially, and in some instances financially. Mentors were also noted for serving as "academic parents" for some participants. Thus, several participants also reported developing a sense of obligation to mentors as well. For these participants, doing well academically allowed them to demonstrate that they were worth their mentors' investments.

Through the community college and community-based organizations participants were able to gain access to high-stakes and resource-rich networks that provided them with valuable information about various college processes (i.e., college admissions, financial aid, and course selection and registration). These structures served as resource highways for participants, allowing them access to individuals that were imbued with various forms of capital from which they could benefit. Thus, both the community college and community-based organizations provided participants with valuable high-stakes information and resources that favorably influenced their academic trajectories.

CHAPTER FIVE: CAPITAL & COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH

> Let's see. That's a great question. How do they support me? I hadn't really thought about that. I guess I can talk more about José since we were taking the same class. If I don't have a good night sleep, I'm kind of like drowsy during class. José just nods at me, and he's like "Get it." If I miss anything, he's just like "Don't worry. I got it." And if he misses anything, I've got him, too. It's usually on the note-taking side. If I miss something, he's always got me. Sometimes he gives me a call. He's just like "Hey, did you do this question yet on the homework?" I'm just like "Yeah, I got you." It's usually just a back-and-forth thing if we need something. He's got me covered and whatnot. (Johnny)

I begin this chapter with a quote from Johnny that responded to the question, "how do your friends in college demonstrate their support of you?*"* Johnny's response highlights the reciprocal value of his relationship with his friend Jose. Through his response we learn that he and his friend support one another, thereby demonstrating the importance of developing support networks with peers while in college. This chapter examines how participants' benefited from relationships within their social networks as well as the wealth inhered in their respective communities. Thus, this chapter responds to the research question, how do various forms of capital influence Latino male college experiences? The chapter is organized into three sections, social capital, cultural capital and community cultural wealth respectively. Capital conceptions[7] have been applied to educational research to determine the impact the different theories have had on student outcomes for several years. For example, in higher education literature, these theories have been utilized to examine numerous educational interests, including student academic preparation, college access, college persistence, college major selection, transfer, and college completion (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Horvat,

[7] For the purposes of this study, when referring to social capital, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth collectively, I will use the term capital conceptions.

Weinenger & Lareau, 2003; Ream, 2005; Dumais & Ward, 2009; Nunez, 2009a, 2009b). For the young men in this study, capital conceptions emerged as factors that contributed to their academic experiences and overall academic outcomes.

Social Capital

Social capital can easily be understood as the value of a relationship that provides support and assistance in a given situation (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Thus, social capital can be accrued through the "strength of ties" in a given relationship within a social network (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2010; Horvat et al., 2003). For the Latino males in this study, the access to high value networks that could yield social capital were developed through networks cultivated within schools, families, and community-based organizations. For example, Johnny developed social capital through his school-based networks. First, he shared that he had a network of "really smart" friends that he developed when he was in high school that he remained close to while in college. He offered,

> They are smart. They have so much potential…[Jack] is studying film in New York. [Frank] is studying some sort of biology in Pennsylvania. [Mike] and [Daniel] are…at [community college] with me. All of these guys, they know how to get on your nerves. They know how to say sorry. They know how to do everything and I like those guys because I guess they are like my family.

Johnny went on to explain that he was the only "Hispanic" in his group of friends who were "as White as this sheet of paper." When I probed to better understand why he was not friends with other Latinos he shared,

> From fifth grade to sixth grade everybody changed. I was like "what is this, people?" Hoop earrings, girls wearing hoop earrings. I was like what is this? Everybody wanting to be like I guess Hispanic—like street Hispanic, you know? I am just like "damn, maybe I should try" and I did. I would sit with all the really Hispanic people, eat lunch with them but I never fit in with them because I mean I am the kid with glasses. You don't fit in with people like that when you're a kid with glasses, pretty scrawny, kind of weak, kind of frail. I did get into my fair share of fights, which was only like one. It was just a few punches in the face. I didn't really like that life so I decided to sit at a different table for lunch. I didn't abandon those friends completely. I just decided you know I better as my mom would say "*juntarte con buena gente*"—you know just be with better people who will like carry you through like better times, will help you and whatnot and that was probably where I made the most friends.

Johnny also spoke about his fear of being considered a "street Hispanic," what he defined as "*mala gente."* In English *mala gente* literally translates to bad people, however in his native country of Peru this idiom refers to evil people. When he was asked to elaborate on what he meant, he offered,

> They [street Hispanics] would do their fair share of bad deeds in school. I mean yeah that's what I…I don't know any nicer term. Mala gente, yeah Mala gente. I don't want to say—I don't want to sound really bad but now I think about it like potential gang members like the people who you would immediately without thinking discriminately say like they could be in a gang.

Johnny's comments reflect the struggle he appeared to have with attempting to resist pervasive perceptions associated with Latino males. As a resistive strategy, he made friends with people outside of his cultural network in an attempt to follow his mother's *consejo* (a form of advice) to *"juntarte con buena gente."* His comments denote a common experience students of color grapple with when they pursue academic excellence.

Fries-Britt and Griffin (2007) noted a similar phenomenon among African American high achievers who they likened to being "'boxed in' based on stereotypes about their race, assumptions about their abilities, and thoughts about their social activities and behaviors" (p. 520). Like the African American participants in Fries-Britt and Griffin's (2007) study, to counter negative assumptions about Latino males, Johnny was committed to "trying to prove the stereotypes wrong in what Hispanics are stereotyped to be." Consequently, he developed relationships with White male friends that resulted in admission to peer networks that appeared to have access to social capital.

Ream and Rumberger (2008) remind us that despite the "nearly one-dimensional focus on the potential for the resources inhering in social ties to produce individually and socially producing outcomes" (p. 115), researchers should not forget that social networks could also yield negative effects on peers demonstrating the downside of social capital. or example, while a peer network of high achievers could positively influence its members, so too, could a network of troublesome peers. Thus, it is important to acknowledge this possibility so as not to romanticize social capital and thereby suggest it as an indiscriminate strategy for student achievement.

Considering Ream and Rumberger's (2008) reminder, let us reconsider Johnny's peer network and its influence on his academic experience. Johnny noted that he attempted to "fit in" with "street Hispanics," but he identified as a nerd, which made fitting in difficult. When defining a nerd, he offered,

> Well, I guess my definition back in the day would have been somebody who is really smart really-really loves school, a teacher's pet, didn't get into any trouble and wasn't cool I guess, you know, didn't dress a certain way, didn't act a certain way, didn't say certain things, didn't partake in any of the bad stuff obviously and I guess everyone's definition for nerd is different but that's kind of my definition.

Thus, he gravitated toward peers who were likeminded and, who by chance, were not of the same cultural background. Consequently, Johnny reported having to "represent" Latinos in his peer group because they would commonly make ethnic and racial comments about him and other Latinos. He offered that this did not bother him because,

> They would make fun of me but I knew that was how they were so I made fun of them. I am just like at least I can tan. You guys get too red just like a stereotypical cracker you know but it never really got on my nerves because it's them. They are my friends. Anyone else said that I kind of you know look at them in a mean way. I'd be like hey watch it, but even though those were racial slurs I don't really like, like saying that I would never get anywhere. I already knew I was going somewhere. I am going to prove you all wrong and they are like oh yeah, we know you will like they actually knew that you know I would prove them wrong eventually but that was also my other drive I guess having, I know it was like friendly fun being like mean to each other but that you know also was a nice little

push to say, you know what even though we're like, you know playing around, I am going to get somewhere, I am going to get somewhere.

Although being ridiculed did not reportedly bother Johnny because he seemed to develop a level of trust with his friends, he still felt the need to disprove their negative stereotypical comments. Thus, it seems that his development of a peer network outside of his cultural group caused him to constantly be on guard against unwelcomed cultural attacks. This kind of constant, and perhaps even unconscious, monitoring is akin to Smith's (1998) racial battle fatigue syndrome. Thus similar to an individual who experiences racial battle fatigue syndrome, Johnny having to constantly remain guarded could result in an accumulated stress that results in a reduction in his "personal sense of control and [perhaps] elicit feelings of loss, ambiguity, strain, frustration, and injustice" (Smith et al., 2006, p. 301). Furthermore, Smith et al. (2006) remind us that experiencing racial discrimination is a stressful life event that may activate a "stress-response system" (p. 301), which can lead to significant health problems if left untreated or dismissed as folly as Johnny seems to do. Johnny seems to "personally dismiss" (p. 301) the impact of these experiences on him, which may lead to challenges for him later on life.

It seems that Johnny was able to accrue capital from his network of White friends that I would argue was both positive and negative. Although I have not seen in extant literature accounts of positive and negative capital coexisting in one's network, it is certainly plausible given research that highlights the potential for capital to take both positive and negative forms. Ream (2003), for example, puts forth a notion of counterfeit social capital (Ream, 2003) to acknowledge that there are forms of social currency that impinge, rather than benefit, recipients. In Johnny's case, it seems that the constant

teasing and ridicule resulted in him developing an unnecessary burden of constantly disproving negative stereotypes of Latinos. On the positive side, his experience may have resulted in him developing transitional strategies that could benefit him throughout his academic experiences. For instance, he was exposed to some of the dominant assumptions about Latinos and was able to reportedly develop tools to confront those assumptions while also cultivating at least two forms of cultural wealth, aspirational and resistant capital, and perhaps others.

For other participants, developing social capital relationships came from ties embedded within their families. Andres, for instance, shared many stories of the ways in which he benefitted from his network of family and friends. For example, he talked about how he ended up attending college in the United States in 2008. When he graduated high school, he reported feeling like he had to attend college to validate the expense of ACS, the expensive private high school he attended. However, he did not know what he wanted to do. He commented,

> When I graduated high school I was more focused on leaving than actually focused on what I was going to do. It was more one of those things that I felt I just had to—I wouldn't have validated the effort and the time put into me being such an expensive—because it was a really expensive private school back home [referring to ACS], if I kind of stayed behind. But at the same time I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do. So I actually ended up meeting with a friend of my mom's, who, he's a journalist and he said to me, "why don't you do something along those lines [journalism]" because I'd—I was a pretty good English student, pretty decent writer. So he said, "you can kind of mix that with something that

> you like—sports or whatever it is." So I ended up going to [West University (pseudonym)]. That was in 2008. And I had, I guess, a pretty good experience there. I had a nice group of friends.

When Andres completed high school and was trying to figure out what he was going to do next, he was able to tap into his family network to make a connection with a journalist who reportedly encouraged him to pursue admission to a college or university with a strong journalism program.

To study journalism, Andres enrolled in West University. He reported feeling isolated at West University because many of the students who attended lived in close proximity to the institution and would return home on weekends. As an international student, he didn't have any family or friends close by. Consequently, he reported not feeling comfortable at West University. In his first semester and over the Thanksgiving holiday, he went to visit one of his best friends who attended a university in Philadelphia, PA. Although his friend attended a school that specialized in architecture, he encouraged Andres to consider transferring to a university in Philadelphia that offered a strong journalism program. Andres talked the idea over with his parents, who told him it "was financially doable." Consequently, he transferred to Cathedral University (pseudonym) to study journalism.

Andres attended Cathedral University during the spring 2009 semester, but reflected that he did not feel he was mature enough to handle being there. He shared,

> Maybe it was a lack of—well, I know for a fact there was a lot of lack of [*sic*] maturity and certain other aspects but maybe I was just a little too young and I should have taken the time to kind of weigh my options and see what I wanted to

> do because my time in Philadelphia wasn't great academically. I mean I did okay. But it was more of I kind of realized halfway through the semester that I really did not want to be there. I didn't feel comfortable. I felt home sick. I just felt like—I honestly felt like I had better—not better opportunities but better—I'd be able to do better things if I actually went back home just for the fact that I felt like I had more of a support group and things could be a little different.

As a result, Andres returned home to Bolivia at the end of the spring semester. Once home, Andres tapped into his social network again. This time, the father of one of his friends encouraged him to take advantage of a business program that had "a lot of connections to Harvard and other universities." As it turns out, the program was housed at the Catholic University (pseudonym) in Bolivia, where Andres' grandfather was a professor. His grandfather encouraged him to enroll in the program and agreed to pay the tuition.

Andres began the business program at Catholic University, but "didn't really feel comfortable at all. I still felt like every time I had to go to class I didn't feel like I was doing something that made me look forward to doing it." He spoke to his parents and grandfather again about his disinterest in the program. His grandfather suggested Andres consider visiting Andres' fathers' best friend, who had previously invited Andres to work with him at his auto repair shop in Santa Cruz. Andres followed his grandfather's advice and went to work in the auto repair shop and discovered he loved working on cars.

Andres reported that while he was working in the shop, his aunt, his mother's sister, reached out to him from the United States and offered him the opportunity to move in with her and study in the United States. He reported,

She said, “Listen, I know you’ve been having a hard time with university and school…I’ve been there and I want you to have the opportunity to do what you want…my door is open. And the deal with me is that you are more than welcome to come here. The only thing I ask of you is that you study and that you do something but that you do something that you want to do, not something that you think you can do and it’ll make other people happy or just what you want to do…think about it…you don’t have to come now. You can wait until next semester. Just get your stuff together and go ahead and do that.” So that’s why I ended up looking into two programs, which was mechanical engineering—motorsports engineering which falls into mechanical engineering. And I knew I wanted to do the automotive program but at first I was thinking of just taking a couple of classes here and there just to kind of satisfy my interest or curiosity in certain areas. And my first semester was actually pretty horrible in the fact that I kind of overwhelmed myself with my schedule and I was taking calculus. I was taking chemistry. I was taking English and engineering design…and I did very, very poorly in my first semester. And I talked to my dad…He said, “I think the engineering side is more a lot of theoretical stuff.” And he said, “I know you and I think you’re a person that excels more at doing stuff…so why don’t you look into just doing—getting your automotive technician degree because that’s something you’re probably going to do better at.”

Andres followed his father’s advice and in 2014 he completed his Associate’s degree in automotive technology.

Andres' collegiate journey chronicles the plethora of ways he benefited from the social networks embedded within his family. It appeared, from listening to Andres' accounts, that he was given a great deal of freedom to explore his interests, resulting in him spending several years and a great deal of financial resources trying to determine what interested him most. As a result he had several stops and starts in his collegiate journey and at the end, spent several years studying to obtain two Associate's Degrees, which were completed concurrently. Thus, it appears that his access to social ties that had high reserves of social capital did not, at least initially favorably influence his college experiences.

However, looking more closely at Andres' educational experiences, it seems that he provides a counter narrative to the pervasive views of Latinos in educational literature. Additionally, he represents a segment of the Latino population that is rarely present in U.S. educational scholarship—Latinos with high financial and educational status. As a result of his family's access to high reserves of multiple forms of capital, he was able to pursue multiple interests until he determined that he wanted to study automotive technology. For Andres, this resulted in him gaining experiences within various higher education settings (i.e., two-year vs. four-year and public vs. private) and learning important tools, such as asking for help that contributed to his academic achievement. Thus, Andres provides an alternative narrative about Latino male educational success that is often absent in education literature.

There is also a clear link between Andres' collegiate experiences and higher education literature on student retention (Tinto, 1993, 1997; Cabrera, Nora, & Castañeda, 1992; Cabrera, Burkum, & LaNasa, 2005; Pascarella, 1980; Terenzini & Pascarella,

1980). Tinto (1993) suggests that if a student becomes integrated into the academic and social fabric of an institution they are more likely to persist to completion. He argues that students leave college for three primary reasons: (1) they have academic difficulties, (2) they are unable to reconcile their professional and academic goals, and (3) they are unable to integrate into the academic and social life of the institution. Andres' experiences prior to arriving at community college seem to align with Tinto's (1993) model of college departure. With the exception of the community college, Andres left each of the institutions in which he was enrolled because he was unable to effectively integrate and he did not feel a synergy between his academic pursuits and his professional aspirations. This is an interesting observation because it denotes how the findings from this study can be analyzed through a different conceptual lens to uncover additional information about Latino male college experiences. It also demonstrates the dynamic nature of the experiences of the Latino male participants in this study.

It is important to note, however, that Andres is a member of the family with the highest education, annual income, and occupational status, more commonly referred to socio-economic status (SES). Thus, it appears that his family's SES standing served to provide him with access to strong networks, such as his grandfather, his friend's father, and his father's best friend, all of whom provided him with access to information and resources that influenced his academic trajectory and achievement in college. However, Andres' educational journey and experiences highlight that while higher SES may result in more direct access to social networks imbued with social capital, it may not bring about greater and/or more expeditious educational outcomes.

Moreover, it became evident that SES played an important part in the ways in which participants yielded and accumulated social capital. I observed at least three different ways participants accrued social capital, with SES offering the most direct pathway. First, participants, like Andres and Flaco, from families with higher SES, had more direct access to social networks with social capital ties. Second, participants, like Marco, Pepe, and Mateo, who participated in sports or other school sponsored activities had less direct access to social networks that yielded social capital than those in higher SES brackets, but more than those who did not participate in school sponsored activities. Third, participants, like Johnny and Chele, who were in a reportedly lower SES bracket and who did not partake of sports or other extracurricular activities while in college had to engage in a number of additional steps to build relationships from which they could cultivate social capital, particularly with institutional agents.

The network pathways participants pursued were also not absolutely bound. For example, Flaco, another participant from a family in a higher SES bracket, had more direct access to social ties than other participants. Moreover, he benefitted from residential stability, which allowed him to attend the same private school until his high school graduation. According to Sandefur, Meier, and Campbell (2006), residentially stable students have greater opportunities to form "closer bonds with teachers, coaches, and other school personnel" (p. 528), thereby yielding opportunities for greater access to social capital. In addition to a more direct pathway to social capital based on his family's SES and residential stability, Flaco also benefitted from his involvement in theater productions. Thus, when Flaco had trouble paying his tuition and was in danger of not being able to have his records forwarded to a transfer institutions, he benefitted from the

support and assistance of Ms. Houser, the head of the theater department, to help him secure a grant. He shared,

> She [Ms. Houser] found a grant. She found me some money through a grant that I needed to pay off. Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to get my grades and stuff in order to be able to transfer. She just offered, and she let me know that she had seen my name quite a bit. It was a big help that she gave me.

The network Flaco was able to establish through his involvement with the theater department coupled with his family's higher SES resulted in him gaining more direct access to important resources that he was able to leverage to continue with his academic plans. Flaco's example highlights that while SES might have provided more direct access to social capital for participants in higher SES brackets, these participants may have also been able to use multiple pathways to obtain social capital. However, the reverse may not be true for lower SES participants. Moreover, Flaco's experience suggests that membership in a higher SES bracket does not equate to freedom from financial challenges associated with higher education.

For other participants, typically from lower SES, accruing social capital was a multistep process that required additional time for relationships to grow and flourish. J.J., for example, yielded social capital from multiple relationships that he established over time. Some of those relationships were directly related to institutional agents working within the college, i.e., college counselors, while others were not, i.e., mentor-parents. Through each of the networks he established he was able to accrue social capital, but the reserves grew stronger over time. For example, he first met his mentor-parents, Rick and Maria, when he went to work for Maria in her non-profit organization. Over three years

their relationship grew stronger as Maria and her husband transitioned into the role of his mentor-parents. The strengthening of the relationship occurred over time, and J.J. was then able to access social and financial capital to assist him with his educational experiences. Recall the semester J.J. could not afford to pay for college and his mentor-parents "wrote a check on the spot" to ensure he could continue his studies without interruption. This example is one of several J.J. offered that demonstrated the ways he benefitted from the relationship he had with his mentors. It also demonstrates the distinct network pathway he navigated as he accrued social capital.

Thus, participants' experiences elucidated multiple pathways to accrue social capital. Moreover, for some participants belonging to families with higher SES, these pathways seemed to provide more readily accessible and, in some instances, more direct capital resources. Conversely, participants in families with lower SES had to invest more time in cultivating relationships from which they could yield social capital reserves.

Cultural Capital

Some of the Latino males in this study appeared to possess two of the three forms of cultural capital laid out by Bourdieu (1986): embodied cultural capital and institutionalized cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986) posited cultural capital could manifest in three different forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. In the embodied state, cultural capital is accrued overtime through an inculcation of the dominant class' social values, which are traditionally passed on through upbringing and family relations (p. 50). In the objectified state, cultural capital is represented in material objects and media, such as poetry, writings, paintings, sculptures, theater or architecture. In this form, cultural capital can be legally transmitted through ownership, yet ownership only

signifies possession of the material object. In order for the object to have true cultural capital value, the owner must also possess the cultural understanding of the object and how/why it has cultural significance to the dominant culture. Finally, institutionalized cultural capital is the third form of capital outlined by Bourdieu (1986). Institutionalized capital can manifest in the form of institutionalized recognition, most often in the form of academic qualifications that can be leveraged for benefit or gain.

Participants in this study may have been exposed to objectified forms of cultural capital, but in their narratives they did not express an understanding of the significance of the object(s) (i.e., a piece of art) to the dominant culture. For example, Mateo and Flaco both participated in numerous theater productions and each reported developing strong social networks as a result. They both talked about the value of the theater productions to their academic trajectories, i.e., learning "discipline," "responsibility," and an "appreciation for memorization and recitation." Yet, neither discussed the significance of the theater production to the college community's consumption of art or the value the production itself offered as a piece of art. Thus, I determined, using only Bourdieu's exact definition as a guide, that while they were exposed to cultural capital experiences, accrual of objectified cultural capital did not occur. Instead, however, they developed important strategies that they could apply to their coursework and academic experiences. Therefore, it seems they accrued what Carter (2005) refers to as non-dominant cultural capital.

There was strong evidence to suggest that some of the participants did accrue embodied and/or institutionalized cultural capital. Andres, for example, appeared to have accrued both. His accounts of his upbringing and family values suggested that he

possessed high reserves of embodied cultural capital. Furthermore, he developed cultural capital through the various networks he had access to through his family and friends. Through those networks he was able to learn to negotiate systems of higher education in Bolivia and the United States and to plan for his future. Consequently, he plans to utilize his degrees in Automotive Technology and Business when he returns to Bolivia to open an auto repair shop. In addition to the repair shop he has other aspirations. For example, he commented that he has a potential opportunity to go into business with one of his friends. He offered,

> A friend of mine noticed one day that the biggest gym in La Paz in Bolivia at the tennis club is the only gym that doesn't have a snack bar. Since we were working out during the summer, we just noticed we were looking at them. It's like a lot of people that come, and everyone is always getting a pre-workout meal – a shake or something like that. He's actually now been talking to the people at the tennis club because he is a member. He's talking to them to see what options there are of opening – of them giving us some space within the club to start a little snack bar because it something we thought about. It's not very expensive. You don't require much in terms of equipment. That's one thing that's going on.

Andres leveraged his social and cultural capital to gain access to two academic programs in the United States. Now with two Associate's degrees, which should be understood as institutionalized cultural capital since the degrees can be leveraged for personal gain, he plans to return to his native country and use his education and credentials to build two businesses.

Johnny appeared to accrue institutionalized cultural capital from his relationship with Dr. Boykins and as a result he reported understanding the rigorous expectations of college coursework. He also reported Dr. Boykins helped him learn how to prepare for college level psychology exams and develop the test-taking confidence he would need to achieve success. He commented,

> That class was hard. He told us from the beginning. He said first exam he expects like 60% of us to not pass. He was right. I didn't pass. I got like a D…After studying, reading my notes, and listening to his advice and help I was able to pull an A at the end of the class. He really helped me.

Johnny reported that as a result of his interactions with Dr. Boykins, he achieved an A in the course. Based on the A in Dr. Boykins course and his strong grades in his other courses, which resulted in his cumulative 3.71 GPA, I determined Johnny had accrued institutionalized cultural capital. As a result of his grades, he could apply to transfer to highly selective colleges and universities, which could potentially provide him access to additional opportunities to accrue cultural capital, and perhaps other forms of capital.

Looking across all of the participants, those who successfully transferred from the community college to a four-year institution also appeared to have accrued institutionalized cultural capital. For example, Pepe was able to transfer from community college to Pilgrim College and receive a scholarship to play soccer. Thus, he was able to leverage his degree, GPA, and social ties to benefit him to continue his studies at a 4-year institution and play soccer. While this clearly demonstrates his accrual of social capital, it also points to how he was able to expend his cultural capital to pursue what he articulated as meaningful opportunities for his future.

Drawing on the work of Carter (2003; 2005) it appeared that some participants also accrued non-dominant forms of cultural capital. According to Carter (2005), "non-dominant cultural capital consists of a set of tastes, appreciations, and understandings, such as preferences for particular linguistic, musical, and dress styles, and physical gestures used by lower status group members to gain 'authentic' cultural status positions in their respective communities" (p. 50). While dominant cultural capital provides students with access to particular attitudes, dispositions, behaviors, styles, tastes and preferences, non-dominant cultural capital operates along the same continuum of community cultural wealth, privileging the "outsider, *mestiza* [and] transgressive knowledges" (Yosso, 2005, p. 71) that emanate from marginalized communities.

It appeared that interactions with community-based organizations yielded dominant and non-dominant forms of capital for some of the Latino males in this study. Several of the participants reported participating in non-profit organizations that specialized in working with immigrant youth in high school and college. For example, three participants took part in two programs: Hope's Promise and/or the College Fund Institute (CFI). I assert that participation in programs offered by these two CBOs had two observable outcomes relative to cultural capital accumulation. First, participants were quickly inculcated with American culture and the ideals of a democratic society, including the value of civic engagement and higher education. This aligns with Hope's Promise's vision to promote active community involvement and civic education to

"strengthen their [immigrant youth] resolve to become engaged and responsible citizens—to take part in democratic government[8]."

Similarly, the Latino College Institute "[L2C] is a three-day, overnight college empowerment conference for Hispanic high school juniors designed to give students the practical tools they need to successfully apply to top universities, effectively access financial aid and scholarship opportunities, and excel in school and beyond." It appeared, from participants' descriptions of how they benefitted from the programs, that they accrued both social and cultural capital. For example, J.J. identified Hope's Promise as one of the primary contributors to his going to college. He commented,

> They [Hope's Promise] talk to immigrant youth about the American dream and how to actually have access to it and how to talk to your – how to figure out what the police and firefighters do and elected officials in the Board of Education. It was just this crash course in American society. Then they also help you with the college applications and scholarships.

Second, participants were able to accrue non-dominant forms of cultural capital as evidenced by participant comments. For example, the participants who benefitted from the non-profit organizations were part of a larger group of Latino students who, through the intervention of the non-profit organization and ongoing interactions, created a community of Latino high school students focused on going to college. Marco commented,

[8] Citations of all CBOs direct websites have been omitted to protect the identities of the participants. For additional information on the different CBOs missions shared in this study, please contact the principle investigator.

> It's a program for high school students [L2C]…It's basically in the summer – you apply for it, and you only pay like $10. You stay at a university. I stayed at Timmons University (pseudonym) for five days. They provide food and everything. Every day has workshops. Everything is about how to go to college. It's for Latinos, so you are with a bunch of the best Latino students from Maryland. They teach you how to apply – from how to apply to meeting employers and things like that. It's really, really nice. That's when I knew I wanted to go to college.

In a subsequent interview, he reflected on his participation in L2C and commented on the program's influence on his academic trajectory. He shared,

> I think in my education, there are a lot of organizations – like the [L2C], [Latino Student Conference]. They met me when I was a kid – I was 16, and I was learning. I was still very immature. I'm friends with a lot of them on Facebook, for example. There are people who actually run it. They're Latino leaders. I look up to them really. They're from all over the country. They do different things. One of them is this comedian, Ernie G. He's an amazing guy, always bringing positive energy wherever he goes, talks to a lot of kids in high schools and colleges. I also see them as leaders, role models. They're Latino males. It's kind of like "I want to be that role model for other kids, too." I think I already have been. Having them see how I've changed and improved – they tell me "You've improved so much. I'm really proud of what you have done." I think that definitely impacts my academic success or experience.

Marco's reflections demonstrate the ways in which he was able to develop non-dominant forms of cultural capital (and social capital) that he believed contributed to his academic success. Furthermore, Marco and J.J.'s comments offer evidence that participation in the two Latino focused CBOs yielded non-dominant cultural capital (and possibly other forms of capital) that participants were able to leverage for their academic achievement in college.

Using Bourdieu's (1986) conception of cultural capital appeared to limit the instances of cultural capital accrual for participants. However, expanding the concept of cultural capital to include Carter's (2005) non-dominant forms resulted in higher levels of cultural capital possessed by participants that they were able to use along their academic trajectories. Still, cultural capital did not appear to be easily accessible or readily available in the same ways that social capital was for students in higher SES brackets. Yet, membership in a higher SES bracket did result in higher reported instances of cultural capital, which aligns with the network pathway proposed in the previous section.

Familial Capital

According to Yosso (2005), "familial capital refers to those knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community, history, memory and cultural intuition" (p. 79). In this sense, family is not bound by blood relation and can include immediate and extended family, living or deceased relatives, and friends one might consider family. Through these relationships individuals learn to appreciate and value their "family" networks and to value ties with their families and communities. This section will explore how the Latino males in this study were influenced by familial capital as they pursued academic successes in college.

With the exception of Chele, whose adolescent circumstances and experiences were unlike the other participants, all of the Latino males in this study came from dual parent homes with siblings and ties to their grandparents and other extended family members. Consequently, all of the Latino males in this study, including Chele, possessed and used familial capital, which influenced their educational experiences and outcomes.

The use of artifacts, as outlined in chapter 3, elucidated evidence of familial capital. Unlike other participants, Andres selected artifacts that represented members of his family. For example, his first artifact was a model car that was given to him by his dad. The model car was painted in the same color as his dad's car. He selected the car because it reminded him of "stuff from when I was little—all of the events I would go to with my dad that he participated in and even the one's he didn't participate in but we went to." The second artifact was a mermaid sticker that belonged to his cousin who passed away when he was 3 or 4 years old. Andres shared that the sticker was "like a little reminder, I guess, of family." The final artifact was "a little penguin statue my mom made that she gave me the day I actually graduated." The penguin, which is Andres' favorite animal, reminded him of how happy and proud his mother was of him.

The artifacts are significant because they were objects selected by Andres to represent his academic achievement. Based on Andres' comments, it appears that he viewed his family as a significant factor in his academic achievement. Moreover, he seemed to benefit from what Delgado Bernal (2001) refers to as "pedagogies of the home…[defined as] culturally specific ways of organizing teaching and learning in informal sites such as the home" (p. 624) to navigate his way through multiple collegiate experiences and ultimately discover his passion.

J.J. extended his family network to include his mentors, who he described as his "mentor-parents," as well as Hope's Promise and L2C[9]. Although J.J. credits his mom with "brainwashing" him about college, he also reported college being his primary goal since he arrived in the United States when he was 13. But going to college possessed challenges for J.J., who was an undocumented student. He commented, "When I graduated high school, even though I got into six out of seven schools I applied to, I couldn't go to any of them because I couldn't afford them." Fortunately, J.J.'s "family" network helped him identify the community college, which became his "only option to go to college." J.J. shared,

> When I was applying to the schools that I really wanted to go to, they [Hope's Promise] were like "How about the honors program at [Community College]? I know this is not where you want to go, but this is an option you should consider." So they made me apply, and I'm really glad that they did because that was my only option to go to college. [Hope's Promise] and my parents would be the main characters of my journey to higher education.

Once in college, J.J. relied on the knowledge his mentor-parents and counselors possessed to help him navigate through the community college system successfully, while taking advantage of very significant opportunities, i.e., becoming the student member of the community college's Board of Trustees, that offered him access to multiple forms of capital (social, cultural, familial, navigational, and linguistic).

Junior benefitted from the *consejos* (Delgado-Gaitan, 2009) his father would share when they worked on professional projects together. *Consejos* can be understood as

[9] Participants personified community-based organizations, speaking about them as individuals and not as organizations.

advice expressed through cultural narratives shared within Latino families, typically "passed down from older and experienced individuals to those who are younger and less experienced" (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006, p. 54). In Junior's case, he reported that while they worked, his father would share *consejos* because he did not want Junior to have to struggle in the same ways he did. Junior commented, "Man, my dad's advice really helped me. It pushed me to work hard and focus more." Thus, *consejos* appeared to favorably impact Junior and operated as a form of familial capital.

Similar to Junior, Johnny also conveyed *consejos* his family would share with him that helped motivate him to do well in school. For example, he reported that when he had struggles in elementary and middle school, his mother would encourage him by sharing stories of her experiences in school. Likewise, Johnny reported relying on his older sister's stories and advice to help him map his trajectory of academic success. The *consejos* shared by Junior and Johnny's families should be understood as reserves of familial capital that they were able to accrue over time and access and use when it was necessary.

Marco and Pepe developed familial capital from their family as well as their soccer team and coaches. It was possible for soccer coaches and team members to yield familial capital because according to Yosso (2005), "this form of cultural wealth…can be fostered within and between families, as well as through sports, school, religious gatherings and other social community settings" (p. 79). Thus, Pepe and Marco were able to expand their familial network and thereby increase their access to various forms of capital. An example of the way soccer served to increase Pepe's reserve of familial capital can be found in his comment,

> I got to be the captain of the soccer team at [Community College] and actually my freshman year I got the MVP as a freshman and I had no idea I was going to get it but definitely that made me value how people believed in me… So sophomore year I was the captain, like I said. I was a lot more aware of what my role was—a student at school first, soccer second—and especially me that was seeking a future scholarship for a bigger school to transfer out of [Community College], I had to be that role model not just for my teammates but for everyone in school. So I was not joking around anymore. I was always in the library. I was trying to sleep early. Just trying to do -- I was trying to be as healthy as I could in every single way. Still bothering professors trying to get good grades, trying to learn.

As a result of him being named captain and MVP, Pepe reportedly developed a responsibility to serve as a role model for members of his team as well as his schoolmates. Through playing soccer, his coaches and teammates recognized Pepe's talent and he was afforded the opportunity to step into a leadership role. The consequence of that recognition led Pepe to learn to value the belief others had in him. Additionally, it led to him developing a positive self-perception—he saw himself as a role model, which also appeared to motivate him.

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital refers to "the ability to hold on to hope in the face of structured inequality and often without the means to make such dreams a reality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). All of the Latino males in this study reportedly had high aspirations and, for some, those aspirations sustained them through college in the face of structural barriers and institutional obstacles. J.J., for example, stated that he planned to go to

college for as long as he could remember. His parents always told him "go to school and do well." He reported that his parents motivated him to work hard to move out of ESL and into honors and AP courses. He believed that he did all of the right things to get to college, to pursue the American Dream, but he soon discovered that the American Dream was not "available to everyone." He commented,

> I worked really hard throughout high school to be able to get to college because I was told that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will be able to get whatever prized possession you wanted to get. For me, that was a college education. Little did I know, that American dream, that view, that rosy picture that was painted for me when I was growing up was actually not available to everyone. Because I'm undocumented, my road to higher education was actually a lot more difficult than others. When I was in high school, I wanted to go to [two local top-tier colleges and universities]. Those were my two favorite schools. Because of my undocumented status, I realized in my senior year that the number that they kept asking for – the Social Security number and the fact that I didn't have that – meant too that was going to be a lot more difficult.

J.J.'s comment is significant because it illustrates the despair he felt when he realized that the American dream was not available to everyone, a common experience of undocumented youth who have had his or her hopes dashed. This realization could have derailed his hopes for a college education, but he tapped into his aspirational capital, cultivated through his involvement with Hope's Promise, and was able to develop a plan to start college. However, when he was ready to transfer, his documentation status and lack of financial security continued to create challenges for him.

When J.J. transferred to Gateway College he experienced ongoing financial challenges as a result of his undocumented status. For several semesters he struggled with how to pay his tuition. As stated earlier, his mentor-parents helped him cover tuition for one semester. But, his hopes of completing college were almost thwarted during his final semester at Gateway College when he did not have all of the money to pay the tuition. He recalled,

> I was living on-campus and running away from public safety because I was not supposed to be there. Because I'm undocumented, I couldn't apply for any federal aid. I had to run to the private banks and say, "Please give me money." I applied to so many different banks, and they wouldn't give me the money – not because I didn't have good credit, because I do; not because I didn't have a cosigner who was a U.S. citizen with good credit and a really strong financial statement. They were like, "We just can't give it to you because you don't appear to be a US citizen or permanent resident." I was going after different banks trying to get money to go to college.

J.J. reported that he felt like dropping out and giving up, but he knew doing so would disappoint so many of the people who believed in and supported him. After a professor asked him to leave a class for which he was not officially registered and being threatened by campus safety with eviction from the residence hall, J.J. set up a meeting with the president of Gateway College. He explained his circumstances to the President, whom he described as "very accommodating." The president arranged for him to continue taking classes and living on campus while he resumed trying to find a bank to loan him money. Fortunately, by spring break J.J. found a bank that was willing to offer him a loan, albeit

with an extremely high interest rate and he was able to complete the semester and graduate without an interruption in his studies.

J.J.'s story is not dissimilar to some of the other participants who struggled to find ways to pay tuition, although he was the only one who reported entertaining thoughts of dropping out. Thus, it seems that J.J.'s undocumented status put him in a more tenuous position than some of the other participants who did not have to contend with similar stresses associated with being undocumented. Yet, J.J. appeared to demonstrate resilience that led to his persistence, thereby aligning with literature that examines the impact of risk factors on undocumented student experiences. For example, Perez et al. (2009), in their work on undocumented Latino students, found that undocumented students with high levels of personal and environmental protective factors, i.e., supportive parents, friends, and participation in school activities, demonstrated greater levels of resilience and reported higher levels of academic success than peers with similar risk factors. J.J. appeared to have a strong network of personal and environmental protectors that favorably influenced his resilience and ultimate academic achievement.

Similar to J.J., several participants spoke about applying and getting accepted to various colleges and universities, but not being able to afford tuition. However, I could not ascertain if applying to schools they could not afford was the consequence of poor advising or the result of their high aspirations. For some students, the limited access to financial resources or the inability to attend the schools of their choice might have resulted in them postponing or not attending college. Yet, for participants in this study, it motivated them to find alternative pathways to achieve their goals. Thus, despite Brint & Karabel's (1991) repeated assertions that attending community college can result in

students having to divert their dreams, the participants in this study were able to use community college to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations.

Jon, for example, shared that he wanted to attend Timmons University, but because of his undocumented status he would have been required "to pay a big amount of money, which we definitely didn't have." He reported that tuition was over $20,000 annually and he was able to secure a loan for $14,000, which there was "no way in hell" he was going to pay! Thus, he decided to attend the community college. He explained, "I knew I was going to college, but I didn't want to kill myself or be a burden to my family to try to pay for it. So, I found a less expensive option." Similar to J.J., Jon's educational aspirations motivated him to find an alternative option to pursue his dreams of graduating college. However, Jon did not speak of his undocumented status as freely as J.J., reflecting, in some ways, the fear that undocumented students experience when engaging in formal educational activities.

Participants in this study recounted several stories about how their parents nurtured their educational aspirations. In most instances, what their parents said made a world of difference. For example, several of the young men expressed their parents "telling" them they were going to college created college-going expectations that cultivated their educational hopes and dreams. They also talked about what their parents *did* as a significant contributor to their high academic achievement. For example, some Latino males noted the sacrifices their parents had to make in order for them to be able to live and attend school in the United States.

Parents played very powerful roles in their children's lives. This was evident when participants responded to the prompt and questions: I want you to think about the

people in your life who have been instrumental to your college success. Who would they be? Why would they be important? And, how were they instrumental to your success? Several of the participants included their parents in their responses. This was especially true for Junior who stated that his father was the most influential person in his life. Junior's family moved to the United States when he was in high school. His father spoke with him about coming to the United States because he wanted to provide his family with a "better life " and provide Junior with better educational opportunities. Junior reported hearing many of these stories when he worked alongside his father as an apprentice. But, Junior also commented on his father's work ethic. He said,

> My dad works very hard. He doesn't get late [*sic*] and make sure he doesn't stop until the job is finish. I learned a lot just from watching him. I want to be like that. I want to do [*sic*] Electrician first, like what my dad does. But then I want to get like my license and own my company.

Working with his father benefited Junior and helped him to cultivate aspirational capital that he could apply toward his educational and professional aspirations. It also appears to have instilled in Junior a work ethic that has benefitted him throughout his studies.

Mateo also expressed strong pride and admiration toward his parents who he believed worked very hard to ensure he and his brother had every opportunity to be successful. He reported that his mother worked as a legal assistant with a law firm for over 26 years and his dad worked for Verizon for over 20 years. He commented, "because of those two jobs they were able to put food on the table for a long, long time." Watching his parents work so hard to provide for the family influenced how Mateo viewed the American dream. He shared, "So for me, the American Dream is just being

able to succeed and being able to provide for your family and still being able to live your dream." Mateo's parents modeled a strong work ethic too, but they also spoke with Mateo about the importance of meeting deadlines and working hard. He shared his parents' advice,

> Do your best, even if it means staying up late at night to finish work because your bosses in the real world – your bosses are not going to take lateness from you.
>
> You make your mistakes during education, not during the professional field.

Mateo reported that learning this was an important lesson, which "kind of influenced my mission of what success means in America." For Mateo, and other participants, what their parents said was as important as what they did. Furthermore, some parents modeled how hard work and a strong work ethic can contribute to successful outcomes, which may have contributed to participants' developing greater aspirational capital by encouraging them to persevere in the face of obstacles and challenges.

Linguistic Capital

According to Yosso (2005), linguistic capital refers to "the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" (p. 78). This form of cultural wealth privileges the ways in which Latinos (and other non-native immigrant groups) have used language, through mediums like *cuentos* (stories) and *dichos* (sayings) or oral histories, to share knowledge. For participants in this study, linguistic capital did not emerge as one of the most prominent forms of cultural wealth they yielded for educational success, but it did appear to influence their self concepts and social standings, which may have, at least tangentially, influenced their academic outcomes.

Language was a very sensitive subject for Jon, who was the only participant that identified as a Brazilian Latino. From his comments, it seemed that Jon experienced challenges identifying as a Latino because he did not speak Spanish. For example, at the end of the focus group in which he participated, I asked participants if there were any last thoughts they wanted to contribute before the session ended. Jon commented,

> So, I wasn't born here. I'm not a citizen. I was born in Brazil. I came here when I was four. But the thing is, I pretty much grew up here…Just because I don't speak Spanish and all this, that doesn't mean I'm not Latino. I'm still Latino, but I come from a different area…you can look at it from the outside and compare it more to the US than say El Salvador or Bolivia. But, just because of that, it doesn't mean we're [Brazilians] not struggling just like you are.

Interestingly, Jon reported not being fluent in Portuguese. So it appeared that his comments were not necessarily about language, but how language is used as a cultural marker that can provide in-group membership. Thus, his comments offer insight into a common challenge for non-Spanish speaking Latinos. Furthermore, the importance of speaking Spanish as a marker of one's cultural identity is revealed through memoir (Rodriguez, 1982; Santiago, 1993) and scholarly research (Edwards, 1984, 2009; Ogbu, 1998; de Jong, 2011).

Mateo also reported feeling shunned by other Latinos because of his lack of fluency in Spanish. He described growing up in a Spanish speaking community and being fluent in Spanish until he was five years old. At five, he was mainstreamed into English speaking schools, resulting in him losing fluency in Spanish. This created challenges for

him in his community because people expressed to him that he was not "Hispanic enough." He recounted

> Being in the Latin community that I am in and being immersed in a lot of English-speaking environments, I guess you could say I got a lot of shame for it. Not necessarily from my family, just from a lot of Latin members outside of my family, who are like "Oh, you're half Salvadoran and half Ecuadorian. Don't you speak Spanish at home?" I mean, if you count my parents yelling at me in Spanish when they're mad, yeah. But other than that, no. It's mostly English, like "*que lastima*." They're like "What a shame." I'm sorry. That's how I was raised. There are times when I do have my very Hispanic moments. But still even that – some people call me gringo. They're like "You don't speak Spanish as fluently as you should."

In addition to him not speaking Spanish, Mateo reported people thinking he was not "Hispanic" because he didn't like soccer and other activities that are highly valued within the Latino culture. This seemed to bother Mateo and in subsequent interviews he talked about the ways in which he tried to reconnect with other Latinos and learn to speak Spanish. For example, he made friends with recent immigrant sisters who spoke very little English and would practice Spanish with them, while helping them to learn English. Mateo's example highlights the cultural significance of language and how it can be intertwined in an individual's identity and cultural group membership.

As an international Bolivian student, Andres did not have issues with speaking Spanish or English. Recall that his parents sent him to an expensive private school in Bolivia to ensure that he learned English as well as he did Spanish. This proved to be

very helpful for Andres, who was able to attend colleges in the United States without the struggles of having to learn a second language. Similarly, several other participants reported being fluent in both English and Spanish, which allowed them to retain their cultural connections to non-English speaking family members.

Pepe, Marco, and J.J. participated in English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) programs while in high school, which made taking English classes in college less of a challenge for Marco and J.J. Moreover, J.J. reported learning English quickly and, as a result, not experiencing challenges in high school or college because of language. Pepe and Marco, however, struggled to learn English in high school and discussed how it impacted their collegiate experiences. Marco reported having Ms. Coi to help him overcome his challenges with English. Thus, when he arrived at community college, he already possessed the self-confidence and linguistic capital to manage the rigors of college English. Pepe, on the other hand, struggled with English in his first year of college and recalled it being his most challenging subject. He was able to successfully complete his English courses with his brother's help, the assistance of professors, and the writing center at the college.

Chele was the only participant in this study who reported not being comfortable speaking English fluently. In fact, approximately ten minutes into our first interview session, Chele commented, "I don't feel comfortable speaking English because that's not my first language." As a result, we spoke briefly in Spanish, but as a native English speaker who grew up speaking "Spanglish," a mixture of the English and Spanish languages, I was not comfortable conducting the remainder of the interview in Spanish. Thus, I offered Chele the opportunity to use a translator, but he did not think it was

necessary. We continued the interview in English and over the course of our conversations it became clear that he could communicate well in both English and Spanish, but that he felt more comfortable speaking in Spanish. It was helpful, too, that I worked to establish a relationship with Chele over the span of the data collection process. Following each interview, Chele would have less formal conversations about our experiences and get to know one another better. This process allowed me to establish a relationship with Chele, thereby alleviating the pressure he felt to speak English perfectly during our interviews.

For the Latino males in this study, linguistic capital seemed to help them retain connections with their families and the Latino culture. For Mateo, however, the loss of fluency in the Spanish language appeared to present social challenges, such as ostracism from peers within the Latino culture that he had to overcome as he progressed through college. Cammarota (2004) speaks of the different challenges academically successful Latino males experience based on the gendered pathways they pursue. In his study, academic success came at the expense of participants' losing their cultural identities. Thus similar to some of the participants in this study, some of Cammarota's (2004) participants also experienced cultural ostracism. Therefore, it seems that some participants were able to develop linguistic capital that may have positively influenced their academic success. Yet for others language may have been a potential barrier. It seems, then, that linguistic capital may have also had a culturally protective benefit for participants who possessed it that I did not see evident in extant literature.

Navigational Capital

Navigational capital refers to the skills and abilities required to move through social institutions. According to Yosso (2005), "Historically, this infers the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind" (p. 80). The Latino males in this study leveraged relationships with teachers, counselors, and other institutional agents as well as connections to community-based organizations to cultivate the navigational capital necessary for them to achieve academic success.

Several of the participants were involved in community-based organizations prior to enrolling in college. It was noted earlier that J.J., Marco, and Pepe participated in Hope's Promise and L2C. Other participants took advantage of community-based organizations too. Junior, for example, spoke about his involvement in the Latino Center for Young Leaders (LCYL) (pseudonym). The mission of the LCYL "is to empower a diverse population of youth to achieve a successful transition to adulthood through multi-cultural, comprehensive, and innovative programs that address youths' social, academic, and career needs.[10]" According to Junior, the LCYL helped him with the financial aid and college admissions processes, and signing up for classes. He shared,

> So it wasn't really like a challenge [going to college] you know because they [LCYL] always help me out so yeah it wasn't like that hard but you know like sometimes it was like when I didn't when I was just by myself, you know I didn't know what to do but then you know they always they were always there like to help me.

[10] As previously noted, citations of CBOs have been omitted to protect the identity of participants.

Similar to other participants who were involved with community-based organizations, Junior was able to develop the necessary navigational capital to facilitate his college admission and enrollment process because of his connection to LCYL.

The development of help-seeking behaviors has been noted as an important factor for Latino male academic achievement (Sáenz et al., 2013; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). For Latino males in this study, help-seeking behaviors were cultivated within their respective networks of support and served as a form of navigational capital. Pepe, for example, talked about becoming comfortable with asking for help. He shared,

> I was so afraid of going to all these classes and having that fear of failure but with help, seeking for help, wanting that help, and being persistent on the things I had to work in I began to learn and I began to acknowledge that help was needed and to acknowledge that I had to be persistent on those things if I wanted to fix them. So there was me just knocking on every professor's door just on the writing center and knowing everybody. Can you look at my essay? Can you look at this? What do you recommend? And I started seeing results.

Pepe noted that asking for help was something he became more comfortable with when he realized how it helped his brother, Marco. Marco reported that he developed confidence asking for help in high school because of his interactions with Ms. Coi. Thus, when he started college asking for help was something he was accustomed to and as a result he was able to serve as a role model for his brother. Moreover, the influence Marco had on Pepe reinforces a previous finding in this study about the impact of siblings on one another's education.

The importance of help-seeking behaviors cannot be overstated. Although help-seeking behaviors have been examined fully within the field of psychology and healthcare, the concept has not received the same attention within the field of education. Still, some scholars have explored help-seeking behaviors with respect to Latino males and have found that cultural and language barriers as well as gender stereotypes inhibit Latino males from pursuing help (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001). Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) found that Mexican American students experience language and cultural barriers that impede help-seeking behaviors, resulting in limited access to school personnel who possess valuable information about academic supports and services. This limits Latino males' access to valuable high stakes information networks that can contribute to their academic achievement (Liou et al., 2009). Additionally, Sáenz et al. (2013) found in their study on Latino masculinity constructs and their effects on college experiences that Latino males "internalized cultural pride, or *machismo,* [which] influences their behaviors, specifically help-seeking behaviors" (p. 90). Thus, the Latino males in their study refrained from asking for help because of the cultural expectations associated with being a man and being able to accomplish things without help. Conversely, the participants in this study all seemed to be willing, if not comfortable, asking for help when it was needed. Some participants reported having to become comfortable asking for help, but all of them acknowledged understanding the importance of asking for help to their academic success.

J.J. was heavily involved in community activities and learned how to navigate several social structures, including schools and local government offices. His ability to navigate these systems was significant to him as he advocated for undocumented students

through his work with non-profit organizations and political campaigns. His experiences were also beneficial to his academic endeavors because he learned how to maneuver through school structures to advocate for his needs. This was evident from the story he shared about meeting with the Gateway College president to discuss his financial challenges during his final semester of college.

Johnny benefitted from participating in a dual enrollment program while in high school. As a result of his dual enrollment, he reported gaining exposure to helpful college resources. For example, when he started college, he was already familiar with the layout of the campus and he knew where the registrar's office was located and how to obtain an ID card. Additionally, he relied on his older sister, who was also enrolled in college, when he was not familiar with how to access services or supports. He shared,

> I rely still to this day—I just have some sort of reliance on my sister to help me do what I need to do to a certain extent like I can do things on my own but things I don't know I turn to my sister because she has probably done them before--scholarships like it was just like how do you do that, she is like oh you just go here, here, here, I am just like yeah I will try to remember that but I had to ask her that again.

Johnny's participation in a dual enrollment program coupled with the guidance and support he received from his sister provided him with the necessary navigational capital to facilitate his academic achievement in college.

To conclude, the relationship between navigational capital and social capital is important to highlight. Navigational capital is cultivated through the strength of ties that are inhered in social capital. Thus, participants with high levels of social capital have the

potential to develop navigational capital too, but this may not work in reverse. Furthermore, the interconnectedness of different forms of capital allowed participants to accrue multiple types of capital simultaneously.

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital "refers to those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). For participants in this study, resistant capital did not seem to emerge as prominently as other forms of cultural wealth. Yet, some participants developed "prove them wrong" dispositions that helped keep them motivated to succeed as college students. Johnny made reference to being motivated by negative stereotypes about Hispanics. He offered,

> The stereotypes that Hispanics won't amount to anything, that all they're good for is the lowly jobs…That's what motivates me. Going against the stereotype, trying to prove the stereotypes wrong in what Hispanics are stereotyped to be.

Johnny was not the only participant who talked about how negative stereotypes about Latinos motivated him to succeed academically. Jon shared that he "does not fall into the stereotypes that people have of Latinos" and believed that "to get where you want to be, you cannot fall into the stereotypes." Marco extended Jon's point, saying,

> But, I think part of being successful is having to break those stereotypes that are real. Those things that are there that may be perhaps if you go the other way people are gonna say, "oh, look at him, who does he think he is now?" But, you're doing it not only for yourself, you're doing it for those people you don't want to let down and in a way it changes you, but from the culture itself, but in a way we're changing the culture as well. That's important.

The comments offered by Johnny, Jon, and Marco align with the work of several scholars, including Fries Britt & Griffin (2007), who in their study of high achieving African Americans, asserted, "students subjected to these stereotypes often attempt to resist and disprove negative assumptions about their intelligence" (p. 511). For Johnny, Jon, and Marco, it was important to succeed as a way to resist the negative stereotypes they encountered about Latinos.

Marco's comments moved beyond simply proving stereotypes wrong. He seemed to develop "resilient resistance" (Yosso, 2000) to stereotypes, actively seeking to not only disprove them, but to dismantle them as well. Yosso (2000) found that students of color who survive and/or succeed through the educational pipeline as a strategic response to visual microagressions—the constant barrage of negative portrayals of their cultural group in entertainment media—are both resilient and resistant. Marco's comments seemed to align with Yosso's findings. His comments about resisting the stereotypes and changing the culture also educe the work of Rodriguez and Brown (2009), who suggest using research methods like youth participatory action research to help students move from voice to agency. In their view, voice alone is a contextual limitation and educators and researchers should rethink how they can help marginalized Latino and Black youth counter the "social and intellectual assaults" (p. 32) they encounter.

J.J. also appeared to develop resistant capital and to demonstrate resilient resistance. He talked a great deal about challenges with the educational system in this country and his belief that it was not built for "people like me to succeed." He shared,

> The system is not built for people like me to succeed. I strongly believe that. Because of how difficult and expensive it is, because of the lack of resources

> available for students in my situation. I come from a low-income family, first-generation college student. I'm undocumented. All of the statistics say that I'm not supposed to have graduated from college. I did. That's why it feels like I'm messing up the system in a really good way.

J.J. increased his opportunity to accrue resistant capital through his ongoing community activism. As noted previously, he was a member of the community college Board of Trustees, but he also interned for a county council member and participated in several community organized and community-based activities in support of DREAMers. Thus, he took an active role in trying to dismantle institutional barriers that could have served as obstacles to his, and other Latinos, achievement and college completion.

Participants also demonstrated resistive strategies to gendered expectations of Latino males. During both focus groups, participants discussed their fathers being the primary financial providers in the household. Johnny commented that it was likely because of the example his grandfather set for his father. Other participants agreed with Johnny and discussed the ways their parents modeled gender role expectations. According to Mateo, his extended family had clear expectations about what a man and woman should be doing in the household, but his parents did not follow those norms. He offered,

> My grandfather back in Ecuador, he provided for everyone even if it was his stepchild, half child, whatever. He provided for them whatever the circumstances were. The one that…changed my dad's mentality is that when he came to America…his mom was the one … making sure all the bills were paid. She made the kids do all these chores no matter if they were girl or boy. If my *tia* Gabby

> was home and the grass wasn't cut, you better go out there and cut the grass. I think that that kind of changed my dad's idea of what gender roles are…recently [a cousin came] to visit us from Ecuador he commented to my dad, "why is Ana, my mom, out there mowing the lawn and you're in here washing dishes. Shouldn't it be the other way around? You're the man, you go out there. She's the woman. She's does stuff in the kitchen. He's [Mateo's dad] like what is this the 1950s? And he's like, that's how they did it back in Ecuador, why you changing things? We gotta help out in every and any way we can. Doesn't matter what gender we are. And I think that is also kind of influencing me.

Mateo's parents cultivated his resistance to the cultural expectations of men and women in much the same way that Flaco and Johnny's parents did for them, although, in Flaco and Johnny's cases, their parents did not rebuff cultural norms. Instead, Flaco and Johnny reported being frustrated by the way their fathers treated their mothers. As a result, they resisted the idea that Flaco shared that "men go out and work and women stay in the kitchen."

J.J., who was the only participant to identify as a gay male, also resisted cultural and religious expectations his parents espoused about sexual identity. Although he did not provide great detail about his parents' reaction to him coming out, he did share that his parents have a very different worldview and did not take his coming out well. Consequently, he resisted their attempts to use religion as a way to "help him deal with" his sexual identity.

Although resistant capital did not appear to be a salient factor for all of the participants in the study, it certainly played a role for some. Whether participants

employed strategies of resistance to combat stereotypes or resist gendered and heterosexist expectations, it seems that resistant capital had the potential to aid participants as they worked to achieve academic success.

Summary of Capital

The accounts shared by participants make clear that capital and cultural wealth were employed to facilitate their achievement in college. Cultural capital appeared to be the most difficult to identify in participants, likely because of the bounds set by using Bourdieu's conceptualization. Social, familial and aspirational capital emerged as the three highest forms of cultural wealth accrued and/or employed by participants. This finding matches research that suggests social, familial, and aspirational capital can intersect and interact. Although linguistic capital did not seem to emerge as a prominent form of cultural wealth for participants, it did appear to influence their self-perceptions and their ties to Latino culture. This is significant because although it may not directly impact their academic performance, it may have an indirect influence. This supposition is supported in literature that articulates the impact of self-perceptions on academic performance (Stringer & Heath, 2008; Bacon, 2011; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Nevertheless, capital and cultural wealth played important roles in the college experiences of all of Latino males in this study.

Additionally, participants' comments illustrated the potential for negative effects of social capital. Johnny's experience, for example, illustrated how social capital may have negatively influenced his friendships with peer networks. His network of White friends may have provided him with access to dominant forms of cultural capital and greater access to resources from which he could benefit, but he also had to contend with

macro and micro aggressions that could have the potential to have lasting and harmful effects on his personal and academic experiences and life trajectory.

Finally, the network pathways participants employed to pursue different forms of capital offers a promising model for how capital is accrued by members of different SES brackets. Those participants from families in a higher SES range appeared to have a more direct path to capital, suggesting that fewer actors were required for participants to cultivate it. Thus Andres and Flaco, who came from higher SES families, were able to access reserves of capital (i.e., familial, social, and navigational), for example, that their families accrued because of their membership in a higher SES bracket. Furthermore, these participants were also able to deviate from this pathway if they so chose, in order to move along the same pathway as participants in lower SES brackets, but the reverse was not true. Participants in lower SES ranges did not appear to have the same direct path to capital and reportedly had to engage with multiple actors across their educational experiences to accrue capital. Importantly, however, membership in a higher SES did not ensure that capital accrued had a positive influence on participants' educational experiences.

CHAPTER SIX: PATTERNS OF TRANSITION & CARE

> The last semester, my friends got to see a lot of my different identities...So they saw me like presenting at community events and later on; and they were always amazed at how I was able to switch from one [world] to the other. I think I've had to learn that…since high school. I've learned [code] switching since then and I'm fine with that. I think the only one that I still struggle with is…the persona that I have at home because I'm not there often. We don't have relationships so it's hard to be parts of me and be…J.J. and feel like I'm being a gentleman. I don't feel like I'm being gentle with my parents. Friends I'm fine, like switching from friends to like work, to academics.

The quote above represents how J.J. described his experience with transitioning between the multiple worlds in which he resides. It demonstrates the facility with which he traversed all but one of his identities (home) as he transitioned between multiple environments. It is used here as a way of introducing participants' patterns of transition between multiple worlds and the complexities of negotiating those borders. Thus, this chapter begins with a response to the research question, how do Latino male college students negotiate transitions between the multiple spaces (school, family, workplace, and community) they occupy?

Next, participants' discussions about care are presented to (1) demonstrate the ways care may have influenced their academic experiences and outcomes, and (2) elucidate the ways in which professors have been able to cultivate and sustain caring relationships with participants resulting in caring college classrooms. The goal of the second section is to respond to the research question, what role, if any, does "care" play in Latino male college students' academic achievement? The chapter concludes with a summary of the salient findings.

Patterns of Transition

As presented in chapter 2, the Students' Multiple Worlds Model developed by Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1996) is a border transition construct that is grounded in cultural compatibility theory and literature that examines how students negotiate borders. Through their research, Phelan et al. (1998) developed six broad patterns of transition[11] students might experience when negotiating transitional experiences between the multiple worlds in which they reside: (1) congruent worlds/smooth transitions; (2) different worlds/border crossings managed; (3) different worlds/border crossings difficult; (4) different worlds/border crossings resisted; (5) congruent worlds/border crossings resisted; and, (6) different worlds/smooth transitions.

Although patterns of transition did not seem to emerge in the ways I had envisioned when I conceptualized this study, careful review of data suggested that participants did, in fact, develop transitional strategies that favorably influenced their educational experiences. Moreover, participants appeared to leverage the strategies they learned to transition between their multiple worlds, which I believe benefited them academically. Participants also benefited from the ways in which capital interacted and, perhaps, intersected with strategies they developed through experiences with transitions. For instance, J.J. talked about how he was able to assume his role as the student member of the Board of Trustees at the community college because of the capital he yielded (i.e., navigational, linguistic, and social) *and* the code switching strategies he learned from transitioning between his experiences as a student and an activist. Thus, it appears that

[11] The border transition construct is outlined in Table 2.3 as described in Phelan et al., 1998, p. 14 - 15.

the transition strategies the Latino males in this study developed also assisted them cultivating various forms of capital and cultural wealth.

Furthermore, I also believe patterns of transition did not emerge in the ways I had anticipated because many of the participants were immigrants with distinct cultural and social experiences. When I imagined this study and the participants I would solicit, I used my own frame of reference as a United States born Latino male. In my cultural and educational experience, I had to consistently transition between at least three worlds: family, the urban environment in which I lived, and school. Transitioning between these spaces was routine and characterized much of my adolescent and young adult experiences. Thus, I had to learn to code switch between what Flores-Gonzalez (2002) termed a "street kid" and a "school kid." As a street kid, I understood the codes of the street, where survival was contingent on a set of skills that did not necessarily or directly align with the skills necessary to survive in an academic setting. As a school kid, I had to be adept at the skills and behaviors that were socially and institutionally accepted. Still, in both of these worlds, there were consistent values and skills, such as respect, trustworthiness, and discernment of who could and could not be trusted, that overlapped. I assumed this would be true for the participants in my study. However, after examining the data and the demographic background of participants, it became evident that our cultural and social referents were different. Thus, my suppositions about what I would find relative to transitions were not borne out in the data.

Nevertheless, in the section that follows, Phelan et al.'s (1998) border transition construct will be used to discuss participants' transition patterns. It is important to note, however, that participants' transitions will be not be discussed categorically, given that

transitions were not static for each participant. Conversely, transitions and the ways in which participants negotiated transitions were situational thus complicating discussions about the ways in which their patterns of transition influenced their academic experiences. For example, Junior commented that generally speaking he does not have challenges transitioning between the multiple worlds in which he resides because he is always the same person in those spaces. He doesn't have to worry about code switching or shifting behaviors because he behaves the same regardless of his environment. However, he also explained that negotiating transitions between home, work, and school poses distinct challenges, such as managing his time, prioritizing the needs of each "world," or exhibiting work related stress in a school environment. Thus, his patterns of transition would fall within two typologies, "congruent worlds/smooth transitions" and "different worlds/border crossings managed," under Phelan et al.'s (1998) border transition construct. Finally, with one notable exception, an experience Johnny shared, none of the participants reported experiences that could be characterized as "different worlds/border crossings resisted" or "congruent worlds/border crossings resisted," which may be because students who do not perform well academically characterize these domains.

According to Phelan et al. (1998) in the domain of "congruent worlds/smooth transitions," individuals move from one setting to another harmoniously. In this domain, transitions are considered easy since cultural beliefs and norms are consistent across home, peer, and school worlds. Generally, several participants' reported transitions that appeared to fall within this range. For example, Jon suggested that he does not change his disposition or demeanor because it makes life complicated. He commented,

> I think for me the biggest thing is to never … be too different, then you're always going to try to fight which side is going to come out...If the two different areas are so different, then you're hurting yourself because now you have to constantly think "I need to act this certain way. I need to just speak this certain way." To me, I think it's kind of stupid to do that. Like I was saying, you really do hurt yourself when you do that.

He went on to describe how he behaves when he is at home, work, and school and how those behaviors and dispositions may shift slightly, but ultimately they are not different. Pepe shared a similar experience, stating that as he matured, he was able to become more comfortable just being consistent with his family, friends, coaches, and co-workers. He did indicate that there were slight variations in the ways in which he socialized with each group, but overall, he did not really change his disposition.

Some participants discussed transitions based on the roles they assumed, i.e., son, friend, student, and employee. Mateo, for example, talked about his experiences negotiating transitions as a son, a student, and a boyfriend. He discussed the ways in which he managed each relationship. Interestingly, he talked about his home world differently than other participants because of the different relationships he has with his mother and father. According to Mateo, he is relaxed with his mother and can be himself. There are "no pretenses" and he does not have to worry about "acting a certain way." With his father, on the other hand, he is constantly on guard. He mentioned feeling like he "had to prove something" to his father because of comments his father made about his masculinity and his overall behavior. Mateo's responses serve as a good example of the ways in which transitions can occur differently based on the role one

assumes and the context in which it occurs. His relationship with his mother seemed to fall into the realm of "congruent worlds/smooth transitions" whereas his relationship with his father appeared to fit under the umbrella of "different worlds/border crossings difficult."

Participants who had experiences that fell within the category of "difficult worlds/border crossings managed" perceived differences in their worlds but utilized strategies that enabled them to manage crossings successfully. According to Phelan et al. (1998), high-achieving students are typically characterized by "difficult worlds/border crossings managed." Flaco's comments about transitioning between home and work appeared to fall within this range. He offered that he found it difficult when his family would show up where he worked.

> I always think it's weird when I see my family come to my job because I'm like 'You're not supposed to be here. You're supposed to be at home.' It's just a weird dynamic. I don't know how to help them as the customer. I only know how to treat them as family.

Based on Flaco's comments, it seems the experience of having his family visit him at work fell into the range of "different worlds/border crossings difficult." Consequently, Flaco had to adjust and reorient himself to be able to assist his family while he was at work.

Flaco also talked about having the ability to switch between English and Spanish at home, but experiencing challenges because his grandmother only speaks Spanish. Flaco reported that she would chastise him when he spoke to his sister in English and tell him his behavior was rude. This experience was interesting because it demonstrated how

even within a particular "world" one might encounter internal borders that require negotiating. In this instance, Flaco had to manage his grandmother's frustration with him speaking English with his desire to speak with his sister in ways that were most comfortable for him. This might fall under the domain of "different worlds/border crossings managed."

J.J. had difficulty transitioning between some of the borders he had to navigate. For example, as a gay male, he struggled with balancing his home, work, and school life, particularly since his parents are not accepting of his gay identity. Thus, he had transitional experiences that might fall under the umbrella of "different worlds/border crossings difficult." J.J.'s response when I asked him how he manages his multiple identities, particularly when his different worlds begin to intersect provides a strong example of the challenges he experienced negotiating transitions. He shared,

> This is a great question. I don't see it as putting on a face for different parts of me. I see them as showing a different side of me. At times – I think I might've mentioned this in one of the previous interviews – I feel like if I've had a rough day at work, I just want to go to a gay club and be gay for that one night. Or if I need to – go to the Latino clubs and dance salsa and dance the night away. I feel like they're just different sides of me, and I don't like it when they intersect. I feel really uncomfortable dancing salsa with a guy because those are two different sides of me and I'm not comfortable with them intersecting. I don't think I manage that intersection very well. There are some that naturally go together, like my black self and my churchgoing self. If I go to a black church, that's where the interaction is great. But my black self and my gay self – they're generally okay.

> But my gay self with my churchgoing self – it's a little weird. It's a little harder for them to mesh together. Then my Latino and gay self – it's a little bit more difficult for them to mesh. I don't know. I don't know how I do it. I just try to fully engage one side of me at a time with a couple, but not all of them. I was talking to someone about this. This is why when I was in Ecuador I ended up talking to this one guy, and it was amazing because I could be black, Hispanic, gay, and American at the same time with him. I just don't have that many people that I can be lots of different things with and really be safe.

J.J. acknowledged the discomfort he feels when some of his worlds intersect and suggested that he does not always handle those transitions well. Thus, his experiences appear to fall under the typology of "different worlds/border crossings difficult." According to Phelan et al. (1998) individuals in this typology define their family, peer, and/or school worlds as distinct from one another, thus finding transitions difficult. They must adjust and reorient as they move across borders and among contexts.

It is worth noting that J.J. seemed to have accrued non-dominant cultural capital (Carter, 2005) in the form of learning how to code switch to traverse the multiple spaces with which he had to operate. As an undocumented, Afro-Latino, and openly gay male college student he was very involved in political activities and social movements. In each of the spaces he had to traverse, he had to learn the appropriate styles of communication, dress, and expected behaviors. Thus, it appears that there are clear benefits to developing strategies to negotiate multiple worlds and those strategies can yield capital as well as favorably impact academic outcomes.

Chele reported having smooth transitions between different worlds, a domain characterized by distinct worlds that require little effort to negotiate. For example, Chele reported having very distinct worlds between school and work, but not having any difficulty navigating between the two. He shared,

> With my friends, that's just me right there. With my friends I'm crazy. That's me. I work. I have to be another person. I have to be responsible, mature. I have to be another person because I can't be silly at work because they're expecting me to be a good worker. They have expectations for me. Yeah. I have to give them their expectations. I'm going to behave in the environment that I am in. I'm going to make sure that they [his friends] understand why I'm behaving this way because I don't want to play at work.

Chele's strategy for negotiating between the different worlds was to just be forthright with his friends about why he was "behaving this way." His response points to the ease with which he was able to manage the different expectations placed upon him by friends and his employer.

Finally, Johnny provided an example of an attempted transition that did not resonate with his identity. Recall in chapter 5 when Johnny talked about trying to fit in with "street Hispanics." In his view, there was a clash in his core values that resulted in him refusing to become a "street Hispanic." Thus, Johnny's experience would be fall under the domain of "different worlds/border crossings resisted." This is of import because it is the only experience any of the participants shared that fell under this domain. Phelan et al. (1998) suggest that in this domain, the values, beliefs, and expectations across worlds are so discordant that students perceive borders as

insurmountable and actively or passively resist transitions (p. 15). Furthermore, low achieving students are typical of this type of transitional pattern. Consequently, I wonder if Johnny, and perhaps other Latino males in this study, was able to achieve academic success because he resisted identifying as a "street Hispanic." This is plausible given Stanton-Salazar's (2001) position on how social networks can both positively and negatively influence academic outcomes.

Summary of Transitions

As noted earlier, patterns of transition did not emerge in the ways I had anticipated. Yet, students did discuss negotiating borders and developing strategies to manage the movements between the multiple spaces in which they resided. Based on their comments, it appears that the strategies they developed (i.e., code switching, self-monitoring behaviors, discerning expectations placed upon them) were certainly transferrable to other aspects of their lives. This was evidenced by comments like the one Johnny provided.

> I'm going to use an example. At lunchtime back in high school, I would hang out with my friends. When they started hanging out in the TV studio, I knew that I had to at least clean up my act. If we were separate from many adults in the area, of course we would just break hell – all hell would break loose. Since we were in the TV studio and there were teachers there and there were always students looking for help there, I knew that even if my friends weren't going to change the way they were, I at least had to show that I was mature enough to be in that room. Say my friends are probably messy eaters during lunch. Some of them don't pick up their stuff. I'm just like "I can't be kicked out of here," switch into good-

> person mode, pick up the trash. If someone says foul language, I try to correct them. If the teacher confronts us about something we did, I make sure to keep my mouth quiet and say "Yes, sir. It won't happen again." That's kind of a mix of the education circle and the friends circle right there. If I'm with my friends and my parents, I have to make extra sure that I don't make any outbursts there. If my friends are about to say something I know they're going to say, I give them this really bad death stare. I'm like "Watch yourself." I remember this one time my friend Bertie – we were in my dad's car, and we were taking him home. He can be a loudmouth sometimes. He managed to say a foul word, and I was like [gestured a look with his eyes] and he was like "That's right." Luckily my dad didn't hear anything. My dad's a little chiller, but he saw that I was controlling – trying to temper what my friend was saying. He knew how I act outside, but he respects that I try to respect the family.

Johnny's example elucidates how he negotiated the intersections between his friends and school and his friends and his family and worked to ensure that he maintained respect for his family and teachers.

Furthermore, participants did not fit neatly into transitional typologies outlined by Phelan et al. (1998). It seems the typologies categorized the ways individuals managed situational transitions and not the actual individuals. This appeared to deviate from the way Phelan et al. (1998) applied the model to their study. Given that this study did not take transitions as its central focus, I may not have collected rich enough data on transitions to ascertain whether participants fit into the transitional typologies as Phelan et al. (1998) describe. Additionally, Phelan et al. (1998) conducted their study with a

different demographic of participants who were in high school. Thus age and demography may have contributed to differences in the ways participants in this study spoke of transitions. Consequently, the evidence that emerged in this study supports the supposition that typologies are representative of situational transitions and not participants, a deviation from the way Phelan et al (1996) described their border transition construct.

Care

Latino male participants in this study talked about the ways in which notions of care favorably impacted their academic trajectories and college success. Their initial conversations about care were grounded in what Noddings (2003; 2005) refers to as aesthetic caring—caring about how students perform on tests or whether they complete assignments. However, as participants spoke more about their academic experiences and the ways in which care contributed to their experiences and achievement in college, they began to share stories that appeared to align with an ethic of care (Noddings, 2005), critical care (Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006) and culturally responsive care (Gay, 2010). As noted in chapter 2, critical care expands Noddings' ethic of care to acknowledge the ways in which communities of color understand and experience caring. Similarly, Gay's (2005) culturally responsive care aligns with critical care and emphasizes educators' active engagement in *doing* something to demonstrate care beyond exhibiting feelings of concern for students. Thus, throughout this section, my definition of care should be understood as a conflation of an ethic of care, critical care, and culturally responsive care, as noted in chapter one.

Additionally, it is important to note that participants seemed to conflate care and support. As a result, I asked participants to explain the distinctions between the two. The responses indicated that participants viewed support as a synonym for aesthetic caring—care *about* someone or something (Noddings, 2005). However, when they spoke of care in more detail, their definitions appeared to illustrate characteristics of authentic caring—care *for* someone or something (Noddings, 2005). The distinction Noddings (2005) makes between aesthetic care and authentic care is significant because caring *about* someone is very different than caring *for* someone. Caring for someone embodies characteristics of mutual respect and nurturing. It requires active engagement and mutual agreement to engage in a caring relationship. Although he was not aware of it, Jon provided an example of aesthetic and authentic care. He offered,

> I think support was more like I was saying earlier. They're there as a resource, but they are not there fully…But when someone is a really caring person, if they see you struggling they are going to be the first person right there to help you, help you back up, back on your feet to do whatever. And you have to show them that what they did was not in vain. The care they gave you was worth it.

Jon's comment speaks to the relational aspect of care and the obligation the *cared for* has in the caring relationship, which is a hallmark of Noddings (2005) ethic of care theory. It also highlights the distinction he made between support, which he equated to a resource found within someone who may not be fully invested in your success, and care, which involved someone being there to help you get back on your feet.

For Latino males in this study, care was central to their successes. In fact, during all of their interviews care came up as a contributing factor in their academic experiences

and successes. However, it was not clear how participants were defining care. Thus, I asked participants to define care in order to better understand how it impacted their educational experiences. While some participants struggled with defining care, others provided clearer definitions. Chele, for example, defined care in terms of caring for one's self as a means of avoiding trouble. He commented,

> If you care about yourself, you're going to love yourself. You're not going to do stupid things. You know you're going to do good so you don't get yourself locked up. You care about your future. You care about school. You care about your job. You care about your life.

His perceptions of care seemed to focus on self-preservation. However, over the course of the study, we revisited notions of care several times and his definition seemed to evolve. In our final interview, he offered,

> That's [care] a complex word. Caring it's a lot of things. In school, if you care about your future, you're going to care about school. If somebody cares about you, you have to care about them, too. For example, my mentor is making sure that I'm doing all the work and everything. He's caring about me. In reverse, I have to make sure that I'm doing everything in return. In return, I have to make sure that everything that I'm doing is going to satisfy him, too. I'm going to do everything for me first of all, but since he's been helping me and cares about me, I'm going to make sure that he's not wasting his time.

The shift in Chele's views could be attributed to many things. However, what is significant about the way his views shifted is how he understood his responsibility within the caring relationship. Noddings (2005) refers to this as the responsibility of the *cared*

for. According to Noddings (2005), the *cared for* must demonstrate receptivity, recognition, and responsiveness in order for the cycle of caring to close. Chele's response and the response of others, which will be presented in a later section of this chapter extends Noddings supposition, suggesting greater levels of responsibility on the part of the *cared for*.

Chele's relationship with his mentor was paternal in nature and rooted in care. He observed,

> My mentor cares about me because he's been there whenever I needed him to. He's not just my mentor. He's like my best friend. I see him like my dad, like my grandfather because I have my father. But my father is in my home country. Every time I feel frustrated or have a problem, I go to him.

The caring relationship Chele had with his mentor was significant to Chele because he discussed not trusting adults as a result of his childhood experiences. He offered that the way his mentor was able to establish such a close relationship with him was by earning his trust and making him feel like he "could be easier" with his mentor. Chele described engaging in routine non-threatening conversations with his mentor. His mentor would probe to make sure he was "all set for classes" or "knew how to take notes in class." The questions would be non-intrusive and impersonal at first. Eventually, they established a rapport and Chele reported that his mentor began to ask "other questions," more personal questions, about his background and experiences. Over time, Chele began to see his mentor as a paternal figure and realized that his mentor was "guiding" him toward his goal.

Johnny viewed care as a tool one uses in support of others. When he defined care, he offered,

> Care is when someone or something is important to an extent that you want to help them or do whatever it takes to be successful, to show love and compassion and warmth, to really take interest in somebody's life, and talk one-on-one, and to be there to support them.

Johnny's definition of care presented a nice balance between the emotional and active characteristics of care. However it wasn't always easy for some participants to define care.

Andres struggled with defining care and when asked to define it during one of his one-on-one interviews, we had the following exchange,

> Interviewer: Okay. So talk to me about how you would define the word care.
>
> Interviewee: Care as in…
>
> Interviewer: care—whatever it means to you, how would you define it?
>
> Interviewee: Hmm…well, that's complicated…I guess I would define it as being—as having some sort of emotional attachment to someone else's, I would say, problems, and knowing that if you're able to help then you've contributed a little bit, that you've put in your grain of salt, and that also gives you a sense of, I guess, accomplishment, feeling proud, feeling good.

Although he appeared to struggle with defining care, his response provided insight into how he views his role in a caring relationship. His definition aligns with the idea of engrossment, which is one of the two characteristics Noddings' (2005) posits are essential in an ethic of care. In an ethic of care, the *carer* engages in engrossment and

motivational displacement. According to Noddings (2005), "engrossment should be understood as open, non-selective receptivity to the *cared for*" (p 15). Noddings (2005) suggests that other writers use the word "attention" to describe this characteristic. Thus, when someone cares, they are attentive to the other and make every effort to really hear, see, and feel what the *cared for* tries to convey. The characteristic of engrossment matches with Andres' idea of a *carer* "having some sort of emotional attachment" to the person being *cared for*.

Andres reported being the benefactor of many caring relationships. As noted earlier, he possessed a strong network, resulting in high reserves of social capital. Although social capital yielding networks are not necessarily characterized by care, in Andres' case, they were. In his network, he had several members of his immediate and extended family as well as a plethora of "successful friends." The accounts he shared suggest that many of these relationships were caring. For example, his close relationship with his father and grandfather could be characterized as caring. In both, the *carers* (the father and grandfather) demonstrated engrossment and motivational displacement and the *cared for* (Andres) exhibited receptivity and acknowledged the care being received. It might seem obvious that his father and grandfather would represent caring relationships, but family relation does not necessarily or automatically equate to care.

Similar to Andres, J.J. was also the benefactor of many caring relationships. Yet, he discussed his caring relationships with non-family members most frequently and often discussed programs as sites of care. For example, he observed,

> I just really feel strongly about how invested some of the adults in my educational career have been in my success in a way that I felt responsible to them – like

> when it came to Hope's Promise and their work with immigrant youth. I feel like their commitment to making sure I succeeded and being able to communicate that in different ways – not just saying it, but helping me with it. Even after I graduated from the program, they have been able to continue emailing me saying, "You qualify for this award. You qualify for this scholarship. You need to make sure you apply for it." That has meant the world to me. I love my parents, but they don't always understand how difficult it is. I feel like having Hope's Promise, an outside organization, who knew how difficult this was going to be for me and made sure that they were there all the way, that made the world of difference to me.

The relationships J.J. was able to forge through the community-based organizations with which he was associated helped him along his educational journey. Importantly, J.J. felt that there were adults who were "invested" in his success.

Cared for Responsibilities

As noted earlier, a caring relationship includes both the *carer* and the *cared for*. In this section, participant reflections on their responsibilities in caring relationships are presented. Although the responsibilities of a *cared for* may be specific to the caring relationship, understanding how Latino males in this study viewed their responsibilities relative to caring relationships may uncover ideas for how to cultivate responsible behaviors in other Latino males who might benefit from caring relationships.

A common theme that emerged among participants when discussing their responsibilities in a caring relationship was demonstrating appreciation to the *carer*. Demonstrating appreciation manifested in various ways. For example, Andres believed

his responsibility in a caring relationship was to show that he cared for himself too. By showing he cared for himself, he proved to the individual caring for him that he appreciated what they had done for him. Flaco, on the other hand, shared that it is important to be direct and acknowledge the care you are receiving by saying "thank you." He acknowledged, however, that this might not always work because a person being *cared for* may not be in position to thank the *carer*.

J.J. offered an entirely different response, suggesting more specific ways to express gratitude for the care he received. He commented,

> I think that my responsibility whenever I am being cared for is to be responsive, and to make sure that I'm not taking the things that are being done on my behalf or to help me for granted. Whether that's a friend trying to help me study, to make sure that I'm actually engaged and not wasting their time. Whether it's my mentor sort of doing something for me and taking me out to dinner to get my mind off of things so that I can be less stressed, I think my responsibility is always to make sure I am reciprocating that. Not necessarily by doing the same thing for them, but just doing my best. That's what they expect me to do, and I think that's why they care so much, because they expect me to do my best.

J.J.'s comments elucidate his belief that care can be reciprocated by doing his best, which alludes to how care can favorably influence academic outcomes. Regardless of the manner in which a *cared for* demonstrates appreciation, all of the participants acknowledged that demonstrating appreciation was a critical component of caring relationships, which aligns with ethic of care literature.

In addition to demonstrating appreciation for the care they received, some participants believed they were responsible for making the investment in them "worth it." For example, Junior commented that his responsibility is to make sure that he is fully committed to his success by doing his homework, going to class, and studying. In this way, individuals who care for him will "realize, oh yeah, this guy is worth me caring."

During the focus groups, care was discussed in detail. Participants offered their understandings of what their responsibilities were as the people being *cared for*. Marco shared,

> Um, cared for. Like I mentioned before that you gotta show that you also care about yourself. So you're letting the other people know that their effort is worth it. Not necessarily just with metrics, but with effort. I think effort is key in being the cared for. One thing about the people who care for you, at least in my experience, if I see that embodiment but not that motivational displacement -- it probably won't do it for me [during the focus group, I explained the concepts of embodiment and motivational displacement]. Because it's gotta be somebody that not only just tells you, ok this is not right, you gotta change it. But it's gotta be somebody that's willing to explain to you why and somebody that's willing to show you how. At least to give you a little bit of a new perspective.

Marco's point sparked rich conversation. J.J. responded, offering

> Back to his [Marco's] point about caring for yourself—I think that's the best way to describe my responsibility as the person who is being cared for. Throughout my college career there were a couple of points where I was close to quitting and dropping out because I couldn't afford it. And there was this one couple that were

> a godsend to me and really helpful in trying to figure out the process for me and like even paid some of it off as well. So in my mind, I had to show them that their investment was worth something. Right? So that in my case was having good grades—continuing to do what I love to do. Just living my life in a way that I am fulfilling my destiny because I know that is what they expected out of me. They didn't expect me to pay them back. They didn't expect me to do anything for them. They just wanted me to have the opportunity to be myself. And those were my responsibilities.

Marco and J.J.'s points are significant because they demonstrate the ways in which participants attempted to balance the care they received with their responsibility to the ones providing them with care. It also illustrates the ways in which care influenced their educational experiences.

As Marco and J.J. and other participants pointed out, it was important for them to make sure that they proved that they were worthy of the care they received. The idea of being worthy evoked previous observations I had made about participants developing a sense of obligation to their parents. It seemed that in order for some participants to feel worthy of care they believed they had an obligation to exhibit particular behaviors and characteristics that justified the care they received.

Additionally, participants discussed not wanting to disappointment *carers*. For example, Johnny reported,

> Connecting to what he [J.J.] said, uh the thing, as I was being cared for, right? The one thing personally for me is that I don't want to disappoint anybody who took the time and effort to care for me. Because, it's just like letting them down

> entirely, not only just that person but our demographic as Hispanic/Latino males, you know. Because, we'd just be adding to all the stereotypes that they say about us, that we don't do much all we do is get the bad jobs. That we don't do anything and we don't amount to anything. And, that's like the one thing—I don't want to disappoint anybody who has put effort into me being academically successful. So that motivates me even more. If I do something wrong, if I get a bad grade, that's where the engines turn on in me and I'm just like, "No! This can't be happening." And I just get fired up and I'm just like "I got to fight the power," you know.

Johnny's comments mirror other participants' conversations regarding a fear of disappointing the people who cared for them. The fear of disappointment is interesting because, as Johnny points out, it has the potential to motivate individuals to excel. However, it could also have the unintended consequence of stifling help-seeking behaviors in students for fear of disappointing *carers*. As Stanton-Salazar (2001) points out, fear can "short-circuit" adolescents and "prevent them from seeking help or render them unreceptive to the supportive actions of significant others" (p. 2). Thus, while it seems there are significant benefits associated with care, it should be understood as a complex concept with the potential for both positive and negative influences.

Caring Professors in College Classrooms

As participants discussed care, they spoke a lot about instructor behaviors that fostered caring environments. Similarly, Saavedra and Saavedra (2007) used caring as a pedagogical tool to create a college classroom climate that enhanced Latino student success. In their work, they found that instructor behaviors, which include immediacy, clarity, humor, dramatic and relaxed communication, and the use of narratives, are all

critical aspects of building a caring classroom climate. Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005) also explored Latino educational outcomes and campus climate pointing out that "perceptions of discrimination and prejudice in a classroom are associated with students' classroom performance, academic experiences with faculty, campus social experiences, intellectual development, commitment to the institution, and indirectly, decisions to stay at a particular college" (p. 237). This is of particular import when considering how care influences Latino male college experiences.

To elucidate participants' experiences with care in college, participants were asked to identify the characteristics they believed were most important for professors to demonstrate in classrooms in order to exhibit that they cared. Consequently, in the section that follows, participant responses were used to generate a list of five caring professor attributes.

1. Caring Professors "really want you to learn."

Andres explained that the professor he really believed cared about his success was genuinely interested in him learning the course material. He shared,

> I think he really wants you—you can tell that he wants you to learn. He wants you to understand it and he wants you to be able to apply it to something useful because he could easily just teach the class and answer a question here and there but he, you know, he is really good at—he'd always ask like, so were you able to fix that alternator you had on your car? Were you able to understand this? Do you get how this is working now? He's very—and not only for the electrical side of it but since you have classes at the same times and there's different courses going on he'd always be like, oh, so what are you doing? I was like, just trying to

> replace the strut on my suspension. He's like did you notice that you can—here, let me teach you a little trick because I used to have a Saab just like the one that you drive. So it was little things in there that really lets you know that these people they care. They're invested in your well being, that they really want you to learn and they want you to do good.

Andres was not alone in his belief that caring educators are genuinely interested in student learning. Similarly, Junior found that professors in college really "do their job" because they want you to learn. He shared,

> Most of my professors they have been really helpful you know. They really do their jobs. You know they make sure they take subject and make sure that me and my classmates we all understand. You know they really do their job. They make sure everybody learns and you know whoever don't learn is because you know they are not paying attention but to me the professors they really do their job in college.

These two participants' comments point to the ways in which caring professors can use instructional strategies to both connect with students and help them learn course material.

2. Caring professors are "approachable."

Flaco shared that the professors he found cared the most were approachable. He knew he could talk with them about his challenges and they would not "judge me." Other participants made similar references, suggesting that professors who are willing to engage with students and take a genuine interest in student's academic experiences beyond the subject being taught were the ones they felt most cared about their success.

3. Caring professors see your potential and "push you."

Several participants talked about caring professors challenging them academically and personally. J.J., for example, shared,

> They've been able to see the potential in me and they've been able to push me in those directions because they see that; and I think that's a way of caring.

Similarly, Jon reported that after only one semester Dr. Boykins was pushing him to consider going to law school. He commented,

> I just met him. But Dr. Boykin's is trying to push me more and more to go into law school because he saw how good I was doing in his class and how good I was doing as a student. He just told me recently – like whatever I need, he can help me with…He's there to help me no matter what.

The concept of "pushing" participants emerged repeatedly when they spoke of how professors demonstrated care. After closer analysis of participant conversations, it appeared that professors "pushed" participants by setting high expectations and clear standards of performance. However, the high expectations and standards of performance appeared to be coupled with a genuine interest in working with participants to help them succeed. Thus, it seemed that professors demonstrated care by setting high expectations and standards, encouraging participants to rise to those expectations and challenges, and believing that participants could actually meet, if not exceed, their expectations.

4. Caring professors are mindful of their words and actions.

Several participants discussed the ways in which professors demonstrated care for them by responding to their concerns and not brushing them off. Marco shared a story of two professors, Dr. G and Dr. H, who were on opposite ends of the care spectrum. Dr. G

was a political science and history professor who expected Marco to invest hours in studying for his course, regardless of what was going on in Marco's life. During the semester, Marco reportedly was having a lot of difficulty and was unable to complete an assignment. He actually entertained withdrawing from classes, but knew if he did he would forfeit the semester's tuition and still have to take the course over. He reached out to the professor to discuss his situation. According to Marco, Dr. G stated,

> "This is your test to see if you're going to go to grad school or not." And then he just said nothing else. I was like – wow. He made me feel worse.

Marco juxtaposed that conversation with a conversation he had with Dr. H, who was the program director of his major. He offered,

> I went to talk to him, and I told them what [Dr. G] had told me, and he was like "I don't think that's fair. Grad school is another environment. It's another setting. This is different." I explained to him that I was having trouble working in the group, and I had these problems with the group and also just with a lot of things that I had to do…he gave me a lot of advice about how to work in groups. Basically the way he spoke to me, it just calmed me down very much and made me feel like I could do it. It was not like the message that much. He wasn't even saying anything about me, like "You're a good student" or this or that. It's just the way he spoke showed me he cared, and it made me feel better.

Marco's comment about the way Dr. H spoke to him is significant. He made clear that it was not, per se, what the professor said, but more importantly how the professor said it. Thus, the affect of the professor's words was important to Marco. Marco's comments

educe Saavedra and Saavedra's (2007) point about effective instructor behaviors, which include immediacy, clarity, humor, and dramatic and relaxed communication.

5. Caring professors take an interest in students' lives beyond the classroom.

Participants spoke about the importance of professors getting to know them beyond the classroom. This was facilitated in three different ways. Some participants were able to meet with professors outside of class, either during office hours or before or after class. During these conversations, professors would get to know more about the participants' personal challenges and professional aspirations. Participants also reported that some professors used classroom assignments to facilitate learning more about their lives. For example, Pepe reported writing about his love of soccer for one of his class assignments, which resulted in his professor engaging in an ongoing conversation about soccer. Finally, participants reported that some professors surveyed their classes about personal interests and professional aspirations and then used student responses to craft lessons and assignments. These types of teacher behaviors are consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy and foster classroom climates that are student centered (Saavedra & Saavedra, 2007; Gay, 2010).

Summary of Care

> *I should emphasize that caring is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling that makes people feel kind and likable. Caring implies a continuous search for competence. When we care, we want to do our very best for the objects of our care. To have as our educational goal the production of caring, competent, loving, and loveable people is not anti-intellectual. Rather it demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents (Noddings, 1995, p. 675).*

As Noddings (1995) points out, care is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling. Therefore, it cannot simply be an approach to the way educators work with students. It must move beyond the realm of best practices and become standard practice. Gay (2010) purports that caring for an ethnically diverse student "encompasses a combination of concern, compassion, commitment, responsibility, and action" (p. 48). It requires educators to see students as people and to move beyond the confines of grades and academic performance toward a more holistic concern for the wellbeing and success of those under their care. In this study, all of the participants reflected on relationships with educators who were able to create the types of caring relationships described above. These caring relationships facilitated academic achievement for the Latino male participants.

It is important to note that care manifested for participants in a plethora of environments and with educators and non-educators alike. It seems that participants were able to benefit most from caring relationships with individuals who were positioned to provide them with resources and or supports to address challenges and obstacles. However, participants also benefitted from caring relationships with family members and friends that may not have had access to the resources and or knowledge necessary to address academic challenges. Thus, caring relationships may operate on a continuum, similar to the way in which social capital might be measured based on the strength of ties imbued within respective social networks.

Additionally, for the first and second generation Latino males in this study, care seemed to motivate them to pursue pathways to college completion because of a sense of obligation to those providing them care. The sense of obligation they felt may have also been impacted by a fear of disappointing those who cared for them. This finding is significant because care could negatively impact students who do not possess academic self-confidence and/or the necessary aspirational disposition and support system to overcome feelings of fear. Similarly, it may adversely impact help-seeking behaviors, as suggested by Stanton-Salazar (2001).

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was inspired by my academic experiences and the ways in which care and multiple forms of capital enabled me to graduate high school and college, and ultimately pursue a PhD. I was drawn initially to explorations of care because of the role it played in my educational trajectory. After interrogating the literature, I discovered that I also had access to and leveraged various forms of capital as I pursued academic success. Thus, my interest expanded to include capital theories. Additionally, I found that the ways in which I was able to accrue capital and negotiate different social settings, i.e., home, work, school, and friends, enabled me to develop important strategies that contributed to my academic achievement. Thus, this study was borne out of a triad of personal and professional interests in care, capital, and patterns of transition.

The study's findings suggest that all of the factors that contributed to participants' educational achievement were not equal, nor did they operate in the same ways to support participants' academic successes. I observed that care emerged as the most salient factor, serving as a conduit that could be equated to a system of relationships, some more significant than others, which afforded participants access to varied forms of capital. These relationships enabled students to develop adept transition skills, i.e., code switching, discerning expectations, and adaptability that also had favorable influences on their academic achievement. These findings have not yet been articulated in extant literature that explores how care influences educational experiences. Thus, they portend significant contributions to educational researchers and practitioners alike.

As noted in chapter 1, the nation's Hispanic population has been the fastest growing group in recent decades. Since the 1970s, the nation has witnessed a 592%

increase in the Hispanic population largely because of immigrants from Mexico (Krogstad, 2014). Census bureau projections indicate that natural increase and immigration will contribute to the approximately 86% growth between 2015 and 2050. Furthermore, the Hispanic population is projected to represent one-third of the population of the United States by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). These growth trends foreshadow significant challenges for the United States because Latinos continue to encounter considerable barriers to postsecondary credentials.

The fate of Latinos, and Latino males specifically, in education, and perhaps other sectors, is in peril. Sáenz and Ponjuan (2009) sounded an alarm in their influential article "The Vanishing Latino Male" and Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus (2012) attempted to further explicate the hardships experienced by this "invisible" population in their groundbreaking interdisciplinary volume, *Invisible No More*. Research has uncovered and mass media has popularized the harsh realities Latino males endure. They are filling the nation's prisons, dropping out of educational institutions across the educational pipeline, overpopulating low wage service industry jobs, being diagnosed with HIV at alarmingly high rates, and representing one of the highest mortality rates connected to homicides (Vasquez Urias, 2014; Torres & Fergus, 2012; Muñoz-Laboy & Perry, 2012; Hurtado, Haney, & Hurtado, 2012; Lopez, 2012; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011). It is no surprise, then, that research abounds with deficit framed accounts of Latino males and their educational experiences.

A central goal of this research was thus to privilege the voices of academically successful Latino males in order to learn directly from them about what influenced their college achievement. To accomplish this, I used qualitative case study methods.

Maxwell's (2005) work offered support of my methodological choice. He asserted, "The strengths of qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers" (p. 22). Furthermore, the purpose of this study was not to generalize to the larger Latino male population. Rather, the study was largely exploratory and sought to privilege narratives of Latino male college success.

Since the aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences, the sample size was limited to 10 participants. This allowed for the collection of robust data, which was collected through three 60 - 90 minute semi-structured interviews, two focus groups, artifact analyses, and a questionnaire. In order to contribute to this research, all participants were required to (1) self identify as a Latino male; (2) be between the ages of 18 and 24; (3) be enrolled fulltime in a postsecondary higher education institution in the state of Maryland; and, (4) possess a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher at the time of selection.

The study also endeavored to contribute to the existing knowledge on Latino males in college from an asset-based perspective to counter the proliferation of research on Latino/as in higher education that disproportionately identifies barriers to their college success (Fry, 2004; Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004; Swail, Cabrera, Lee, & Williams, 2005; Lopez, 2009; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). However, it is also important to acknowledge the literature that illuminates the significant challenges with which Latinos, and specifically Latino males, must contend in order to successfully move through the higher education pipeline. Despite the deficit framing found in the literature, the challenges Latino males face is legitimate and potentially disruptive to their educational success. I believe one

way to interrupt those challenges is to interrogate the ways Latino males have been able to successfully navigate institutions of higher education.

In this concluding chapter, I discuss the findings that emerged from participants' accounts of the factors that contributed to their success in college. The discussion section provides suppositions drawn from the data to respond to the research questions that guided this study. Thus, the discussion of key findings is organized by the research questions. Following the discussion of key findings, I address implications for theory, research, and practice and then offer concluding remarks about the experiences of the Latino males whose voices narrated the findings of this study.

Discussion of Key Findings

RQ1: What factors do Latino males perceive as contributing to their achievement in college?

Participants' perceptions of academic achievement were most influenced by interactions within three social structures: family, school, and community, particularly through their ability to leverage relationships within these arenas. Although there may be other structures and/or factors that influenced participants' perceptions of academic achievement, the three most salient factors are presented in Figure 7.1. The diagram depicts the interactive and cooperative nature of school, family, and community structures on participants' perceptions of academic achievement.

Figure 7.1. Themes influencing student perceptions of academic achievement

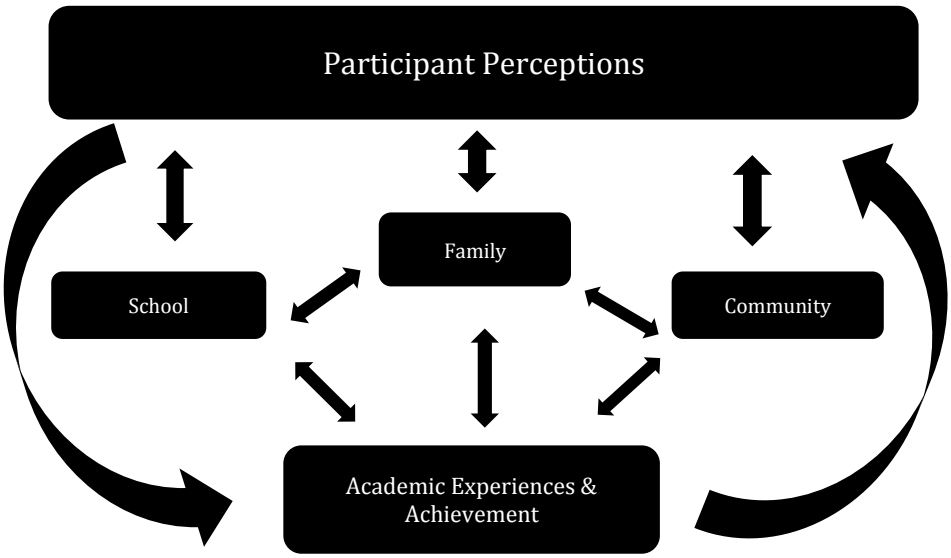


Figure 7.1 provides a visual representation of the ways in which participants reportedly developed perceptions of academic achievement. Family, school, and community all facilitated the creation of relationships that influenced participants' perceptions of and experiences with education. In some instances, the actors within these social structures operated independently and in others they worked in tandem to influence Latino males in this study. Thus, in the section that follows, the ways in which relationships within family, school, and community structures influenced participants are presented.

Family Influence & Latino Cultural Traditions

Participants spoke of family members as the most significant factor that contributed to their college achievement. Thus, the role of *familismo* emerged as a salient and positive influence on the Latino males in this study. This finding stands in opposition to existing literature that suggests *familismo* may have an adverse impact on

Latino educational outcomes (López Turley, 2005; Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda, & Yoshikawa, 2013; Martinez, 2013). Based on participants' comments, it seemed that a hierarchy of family role significance emerged, with fathers being spoken of most often, but mothers having the greatest and most direct influence on participants' *educational* aspirations. Siblings and grandparents were also spoken of although they did not appear to have the same level of influence as mothers and fathers.

Latino cultural traditions, cultivated within Latino families, also emerged as a significant influence on Latino male participants' educational experiences. For instance, as noted earlier *familismo* was evident in the ways participants spoke about their families. Similarly, families used *consejos* (advice expressed through cultural narratives) to draw on their personal experiences as a means of instilling in participants the importance of being *bien educado* (Bridges et al., 2012). In Latino culture, *bien educado* is the idea that being well educated is more than just an academic undertaking (Bridges et al., 2012). *Bien educado* also includes being well-mannered, respectful of elders, and responsible (Auerbach, 2007; Carger, 1996; Olmeda, 1993), all of which are the parents' responsibility to instill in their children (Hill & Torres, 2010). Thus, the role of the family was of significance to the education of the Latino males in this study and contributed to their overall academic experiences and outcomes. Finally, it is also important to note that with the exception of Chele, all of the participants in this study appeared to come from stable homes, where both parents were present and actively engaged in their educational experiences. Thus, the participants in this study did not have to contend with the risk factors commonly associated with marginalized groups that reside in single parent homes (Barajas, 2011).

Fathers

Fathers seemed to represent the masculine archetype for many of the participants who reported learning about how to "be men" from their fathers. Fathers also perpetuated cultural gender norms. This was particularly significant because participants who took issue with their fathers perpetuating gendered cultural norms attempted to resist those behaviors. It also allowed participants to do some critical self-reflections about their actions and how they might perpetuate the very behaviors they were attempting to resist. For example, Flaco was reportedly uncomfortable with the gendered expectations his father had of his mother, yet in his responses he shared similar expectations of his mother. When confronted with his behaviors aligning with his father's, he responded, "I do that, but I think I do it because it's my mom." Flaco's comment is a reflection of the inner struggle he had with the dual roles his mother maintained as a spouse and as a mother. Flaco believed that his father should treat his mother respectfully because he was her spouse. Thus, the expectations his father had, i.e., for his mother to have dinner on the table when he got home, was not the same as the expectation Flaco had for his mother to serve him food. Instead, I believe Flaco saw this as part of her motherly obligations. Hence, his response, "I do that, but I think I do it because it's my mom."

Additionally, when some participants spoke of their fathers' expectations they discussed gender roles and their fathers expecting them to "act" like men. When probed about what acting like a man meant, participants offered varied responses, which included "taking responsibility for stuff," "being with one woman," "fulfilling your duties as a student," "being mature and knowing when to act." Participants' comments aligned with Harris' (2010) work on the contextual influences of college men's meanings

of masculinities. In his study, he found that "parents, especially fathers, socialized the participants to behave and interact in ways that were deemed acceptable by traditional expectations of masculinities" (p. 307). Similar to the participants in this study, the males in Harris' (2010) study associated masculinity with "assuming responsibility," "being respected," and "being confident and self assured" (p. 305). Additionally, the men in Harris' study spoke of resisting stereotypes and performing masculinities based on what they deemed appropriate. Harris' work and the evidence presented in this study suggest that men in college experience similar conflicts between the gendered norms they learned from their fathers and the values they believe appropriately represent their masculinities. Exploring this phenomenon might help uncover additional ways masculinity and cultural gender expectations influence Latino male academic experiences and outcomes. For the males in this study, it seemed to have a favorable motivating effect.

Mothers

Participants' comments pointed to the different ways fathers and mothers were discussed in the study. Whereas some fathers were presented as strong male figures and others were discussed as loving and caring, mothers were consistently referred to as caregivers and nurturers. Moreover, it seemed that although fathers were discussed more frequently because of their influence on participants' perceptions of work, masculinity, and gender cultural norms, mothers had a more significant impact on participants' educational experiences and outcomes.

When most participants spoke about their mothers, they talked about her high aspirations of them, which included attending college. While some participants, like

Andres, Johnny, and Junior spoke of their fathers' support of them in college, fathers did not appear to express explicit expectations about going to college. Participants' comments suggested that fathers spoke of education generally, i.e., its importance, its value, the significance of learning and gaining the necessary skills to provide for the family, but mothers explicitly spoke of attending college. Thus, mothers appeared to influence college-going behaviors most directly. Likewise, mothers seemed to develop parental prophecies of school success and college completion for the Latino males in this study. Therefore, the influence of maternal expectations and aspirations seemed to influence Latino male college-going aspirations most of all family members.

Teachers and College Professors

Teachers and other school-based adults also appeared to contribute to the college achievement of Latino males in this study. According to participants, the most salient behaviors exhibited by teachers and professors fostered academic confidence, aspirations for the future, and a sense of safety for them to take academic risks without fear of being psychologically harmed. These behaviors align with extant literature on culturally responsive teaching (Ladson Billings, 1995, 1998; Gay, 2010; Irizarry, 2011a, 2011b) and caring classrooms (Valenzuela, 1999; Noddings, 2005; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006; Gay, 2010).

Participants' comments also exposed differences in the ways K-12 teachers and college professors influenced their academic experiences and outcomes. Whereas K-12 teachers were described as nurturers, professors were not. Furthermore, college professors engaged in caring relationships with participants that appeared to manifest differently than care offered by K-12 teachers. K-12 teachers purportedly spent more

time building students academic confidence and helping them see possibilities within themselves. Conversely, college professors appeared to employ collaborative strategies to work with students, demonstrating care through discussions about discipline specific career opportunities and life beyond the confines of the institution. The observable differences in the ways K-12 teachers and college professors engaged with participants may be, at least in part, due to the differences in participants' maturity levels and social and cognitive development. Nevertheless, acknowledging these differences is significant when examining how K-12 teachers and college professors influenced participants' educational trajectories and experiences. Moreover, there may be some value in identifying caring behaviors of college professors in an attempt to cultivate safer and more caring spaces within college environments for Latino males.

Other School-Based Adults

Coaches and counselors were identified as other school-based adults that influenced participants' educational experiences. These institutional agents were able to work with students within school settings, but outside of the confines of traditional teacher/student relationships. I believe this positioned coaches and counselors to more easily develop relationships with participants and influence their experiences in very distinct ways.

The positive effects of sports on Black male students' academic outcomes have been well documented since the 1980s (Melnick, Sabo, & Vanfossen, 1992). However, a gap in the literature on the impact of sports on Latino males persists. Among the limited studies available, there appears to be a positive correlation between sports and Latino male achievement (Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Coe et al., 2006; Towe, 2011). For some of

the participants in this study, coaches appeared to influence the ways in which they developed important skills (i.e., discipline, respect, and responsibility) that they could transfer to their academic experiences. The impact of coaches is significant and warrants further exploration. For participants in this study, soccer was discussed most often, likely because of the high interest in soccer in Latin American countries. Moreover, future research should investigate the role soccer, a game that is deeply cherished in Latin American countries, plays in Latino male educational experiences and outcomes. It is a sport bound by rules and played in a highly structured environment, and whose outcomes are often thought to be associated with skill and merit (Arbena, 1988).

Similarly, counselors appeared to favorably impact some of the participants' educational experiences. J.J. provided a good example of how his counselor at the community college created a caring and supportive space for him to de-stress. Through an open door policy and acts of kindness (i.e., making him hot chocolate), his counselor demonstrated care for him in ways that were noticeably absent when he transferred to a four-year institution. Interestingly, J.J. believed he experienced greater stress and had less support to deal with it when he transferred from the community college. Thus, it seems there may be some benefit to investigating the disparate ways counselors work with students at two and four year institutions to determine if there are, in fact, differences and how those differences might impact students.

Community Factors

Three community factors reportedly impacted participants' perceptions of academic achievement and college experiences: mentors, community college, and community-based organizations. Mentoring has been well documented as a benefit to

students of color enrolling in post-secondary education (Noguera, Hurtado, & Ferguson, 2012; Torres & Hernandez, 2009; Zalquett & Lopez, 2006; Hall, 2006; Laden, 2006). Several of the participants in this study discussed how they benefitted from mentoring relationships.

Trends in the data emerged between participants and how they engaged with their mentors. Participants and their mentors established a rapport over time. Thus, when considering the strength of ties imbued in mentoring relationships, they might be viewed as weak initially, but appear to grow stronger over time. Mentors provided emotional, social, academic and, in some instances, financial support to participants. Furthermore, mentees seemed to have substantial unlimited access to mentors and their guidance so that their mentors appeared to also assume the role of life coaches. Additionally, mentors seemed to provide participants with "tough love" when necessary. In all instances, however, mentor relationships were rooted in care and appeared to motivate participants to pursue higher levels of educational attainment because of a sense of obligation participants reportedly felt towards their mentors. While this sense of obligation appears to have been a positive attribute of the mentor/mentee relationship in this study, it could potentially hinder mentor/mentee relationships from forming or dissuade students from pursuing mentoring all together. For the participants in this study, that was not the case. However, Stanton-Salazar (2001) warns of this possibility when discussing the negative effects of social capital yielding relationships.

Community College

For Latinos, and Latino males especially, community colleges often serve as a bridge to a Bachelor's degree. According to Martinez and Fernández (2004), "Latino

students are far more likely to be enrolled in two-year colleges than students from any other racial or ethnic group" (p. 51). Research purports that this is largely due to affordability, accessibility, program offerings, career and skills development, flexible scheduling, and proximity to home (Martinez & Fernández, 2004; Vasquez Urias, 2012; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011; Sáenz et al., 2013). The Latino male participants in this study selected the community college for two primary reasons: affordability and program offerings. Many of the Latino males in this study enrolled in community college because they could not afford to attend the selective colleges and universities to which they were accepted. Thus, the community college provided them with entrée into higher education while also serving as a prominent factor in their educational experiences. Through the community college, participants were able to gain access to numerous capital yielding opportunities as well as caring relationships. Thus, the community college appeared to serve as a resource highway for participants, facilitating the successful transfer and completion of five of the participants. This finding was significant given that research has demonstrated that while community college is the preferred access point for Latinos and Latino males specifically, the numbers of Latino males persisting, transferring, and/or completing community college are abysmally low. In one of the only studies on Latino males in public 2-year institutions, Vasquez Urias (2012) reported,

> After their first year of enrollment in community college, 12.9% of Latino males will have left without return. By year two, 35.2% will have either left without return or no longer be enrolled. Over time, this trend increases, as 57.6% of Latino males either leave college without return or are no longer enrolled after six years (Vasquez Urias, 2012, p. 1).

Given the disproportionately high number of Latino males enrolling in community college and the significantly low numbers persisting to graduation, the findings from this study may be of import to community college professionals.

The community college served a multifaceted and complex role in the lives of participants, functioning as an extension of high school for some. Although this view of the community college may perpetuate a common and stereotypical portrayal of community colleges, it should not be dismissed. Several participants noted the community college serving as a mediator of skills deficits, in writing for example, that they possessed post high school graduation. Through remediating coursework and intensive supports, i.e., academic support centers and counseling, participants reportedly learned the necessary academic and social skills necessary to succeed in college. Thus, several participants were able to transfer to four-year institutions and successfully graduate with GPAs above 3.0.

Moreover, the community college allowed many of the participants to learn to balance the rigors of coursework with work, sports, and other extracurricular activities in order for them to persist to completion. This is significant because in recent years scholars have examined the educational attainment of Latino men, advocating a number of persuasive rationales for why these men are not successfully persisting and completing college. For example, Sáenz and Ponjuan (2009, 2011) identified a number of plausible barriers—institutional, structural, and cultural—that inhibit Latino males from achieving their academic goals. These barriers include having to work while in college, competing cultural notions of academic success (success may not equate to achieving a high GPA), and sociocultural stressors, i.e., cultural gender expectations and peer pressure. Ojeda et

al. (2011) found that the Mexican American males in their study contended with a number of obstacles, including a lack of finances, poor academic preparation, and limited personal investments in college that adversely impacted their college-going experiences. Similarly, the men in this study experienced many of the challenges outlined in the literature. Yet, they were reportedly able to confront and overcome obstacles with the help of resources they accessed through the community college.

Participants also spoke about academic support services available to them at the community college. For example, several participants spoke about using the writing center to assist them with papers and other writing assignments. Yet, participants offered mixed comments about the services they received in the center. For example, one participant discussed how the comments he received from the tutor appeared to contradict what his professor said. Another participant talked about how comfortable he felt in the writing center and how his writing improved as a result of the tutoring he received through the center. It seems the services provided benefitted participants, but future research might explore how students experience these services differently and what, if anything, could be done to ensure consistency in student experiences and assess how the services impact student outcomes.

Finally, some participants spoke about access to athletics and the distinction between playing sports in the community college versus four-year institutions. Through participants' comments, I observed that community college coaches placed greater emphasis on academic performance than did coaches in four-year institutions. Furthermore, coaches in the community college were reportedly focused on helping participants use sports as a way to secure funding, through scholarships and/or work

opportunities, to cover tuition and expenses at four-year institutions. Conversely, four-year college coaches were less focused on academics, although academics were still reportedly important. Moreover, according to participants, coaches at four-year institutions did not discuss post secondary education options beyond the baccalaureate degree. Instead, they talked about opportunities to continue playing soccer professionally beyond college. The distinction in the ways coaches supported participants in the community college versus four-year institutions is significant, particularly for Latino males who enjoy playing sports but may not have the same commitment to their academics. This was particularly salient for participants who expressed that soccer motivated them to do well academically because in order to play they had to maintain good grades. Additionally, those participants reported that eventually playing soccer *and* maintaining good grades became dual goals as a result of their coaches working with them to understand the importance of good grades beyond soccer (i.e., for transfer and scholarships).

Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations (CBOs) helped to guide some of the participants to the community college, offering them an alternative option to pursue higher education when they cold not afford tuition at a four-year college or university. Additionally, CBOs helped the Latino males in this study, many whose families lacked awareness of the American higher education system, to navigate the college application, admission, and financial aid processes. Thus, similar to community colleges, CBOs appeared to serve as resource and information highways for the Latino male participants. Thus, exploring ways to tap into the resources and information provided through CBOs to

support Latino males are of import. Likewise, fortifying partnerships with CBOs and K-12 and postsecondary educational institutions that work directly with Latino males may help strengthen the higher education pipeline and redirect Latino males who might otherwise end up in the prison pipeline (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011; Rios, 2011; Alexander, 2012).

RQ2: How do various forms of capital influence Latino male college students' academic achievement?

Participants were able to access various forms of capital through a resource highway of sorts that was made possible through caring relationships. Thus, capital had a significant impact on all of the participants' educational experiences and academic achievement. However, it is important to note that capital appeared to positively and negatively influence participants' academic outcomes. This finding aligns with literature that articulates the double-sided nature of capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Horvat et al., 2003; Monkman et al., 2005). Thus, capital manifested in different ways for participants and had both positive and negative influences on participants' academic outcomes.

Additionally, a network pathway for capital accrual appeared to emerge in the data. Thus, some forms of capital may have been accrued more directly by participants who were members of families in higher SES brackets, although that did not necessarily translate into greater educational outcomes. Still, all participants were able to accrue and utilize multiple forms of capital, sometimes independently and in other instances concomitantly, to influence their academic experiences and outcomes. This study considered the ways social capital, cultural capital and community cultural wealth

impacted Latino male participants academic achievement. Next, I will address each form of capital individually and reference others when intersections are evident.

Social Capital

In this study, social capital manifested through familial, social, and educational relationships participants cultivated throughout their academic trajectories. In postsecondary education, however, research on social capital is limited (Martin, 2009), but when research is available it suggests that resources gained through various networks are beneficial to college students (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Moreover, the concept of social capital has long been criticized for its lack of conceptual clarity and several scholars have noted the different ways social capital has been applied to studies within the field of education (Putnam, 2000; Dika & Singh, 2002; Horvat et al., 2003; Sandefur, Meier, & Campbell, 2005). Yet, as Putnam (2000) articulates, "the central idea of social capital…is that networks and associated norms of reciprocity have value" (p. 1). Thus, in this study, it was clear that participants were able to cultivate ties to networks that were imbued with social capital. Moreover, participants' accounts of familial and social relationships were representative of the ways social capital influenced their educational experiences.

Social capital operated as a mediator for some participants and their families who lacked an awareness of the American higher education system. For example, through network ties established through community-based organizations, several participants spoke about learning how to apply for college, financial aid, and other support services. They also reportedly discovered alternative pathways to higher education, i.e., the

community college and dual enrollment programs. Thus, it seemed that social capital played a significantly positive role in many of the participants' educational experiences.

The differing ways participants accrued and benefited from social capital was a significant observation. Members of families in higher SES brackets appeared to accrue social capital more quickly and with fewer members within their networks. Consider as an example Andres' college-going story and the ways in which he was able to tap into his familial network for support. He appeared to have direct access to social capital through his parents and grandfather. Conversely, J.J., who does not belong to a family in the same SES bracket as Andres, reportedly had to tap into his familial network as well as establish relationships with teachers, advisors, counselors, and members of non-profit organizations in order to gain access to the same community college that Andres attended. Furthermore, J.J. was able to complete his Bachelor's degree in four years, which was shorter than the amount of time it took Andres to complete his Associate's degree. This observation generated additional questions for future research about whether Andres' access to a more direct network of social capital yielded the same benefits as J.J.'s dense network and, if not, why? It also raised questions about how social capital is measured and what imbues some relationships with more value than others.

Although measurements of the value of networks imbued with social capital are still largely debated in the literature, it is clear that some forms of social capital have varying levels of value. Some scholars suggest there are strong ties and weak ties embedded within relationships and those can be used to determine the value of networks (Coleman, 1988; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Perna & Titus, 2005). Moreover, literature suggests parental social capital is weaker than social capital yielded from

teachers and other institutional agents. In this study, however, I found that while parental social capital is different than social capital accrued from teachers and school-based agents, it was not necessarily weaker. Instead, I would suggest participants leveraged capital differently and when used in concert with other forms, parental social capital can have a significant impact on students' educational trajectories. Furthermore, in some instances, it seemed that parental social capital was necessary in order for participants to even consider developing relationships with teachers and other school based agents that could yield social capital. Johnny, for example, reportedly did not trust teachers after his experience with Ms. Sherling. It was only after his mother shared *consejos* with him and began to encourage him academically that he started to rethink how he related to teachers. Consequently, Johnny reported network ties with teachers in high school and college that benefited his academic experiences.

Andres' example points to a potential downside of social capital and, perhaps, cultural wealth. His access to high reserves of capital resulted in a protracted timeline to complete his Associate's degree. Thus, in six years, he boasted high levels of varied forms of capital, yet only obtained the lowest postsecondary degree available. I believe this was an important observation, but I also believe it is important to acknowledge my own bias as it relates to this remark. As a Latino male who was raised in a lower SES family, I learned to pursue educational interests expeditiously. I was not afforded opportunities to explore my interests in the same way that Andres was and this may have influenced my observations about how long it took him to complete his Associate's degree.

In response to the research question, it appears that social capital provided participants with access to high information networks that were resource rich and benefited them academically (Liou et al., 2009). These networks enabled them to develop the necessary resources (i.e., awareness of financial aid processes, college admissions processes, and how to register for classes) and behaviors (i.e., help seeking and study habits) to achieve academic success. However, social capital should not be viewed as a singularly positive factor. As previously noted, larger accruals of social capital could have a perceivably adverse impact on students (i.e., prolonged studies and greater financial obligations).

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital was not a prominent form of capital possessed by participants in this study, likely because "the concept has come to assume a large number of, at times, contradictory meanings" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). As a means of bounding how cultural capital was viewed in this study, I relied on Bourdieu's (1986) conception, which includes three forms of cultural capital: embodied, objectified, and institutional, and Carter's (2005) concept of non-dominant forms. Including Carter's non-dominant forms of cultural capital allowed me to expand Bourdieu's theory to include the types of capital that might be found within marginalized communities.

This study found that participants demonstrated evidence of embodied, institutionalized, and non-dominant cultural capital, which in some instances contributed to participants' academic experiences. Significantly, it seemed impossible to justify suggesting any participant possessed objectified cultural capital because of its definitional constraints. According to Bourdieu (1986), in order for one to possess objectified forms

of cultural capital, they must retain the object that is imbued with the capital *and* also understand its significance to the dominant culture. Without a dominant cultural broker, it would seemed rather difficult, if not impossible, for any of the participants in this study to be able to ascertain what the significance of a piece of opera, such as *La Traviata,* is to the dominant culture. Thus, it seems that the definition of objectified cultural capital makes it nearly impossible for non-dominant groups to attain without the intervention of a dominant cultural broker. This may be why social capital is commonly discussed in much of the literature on cultural capital. Nevertheless, participants did reportedly accrue other forms of cultural capital through relationships with professors, other dominant cultural brokers, and members of their respective cultural groups.

Some participants were able to establish social networks that provided them with access to non-dominant cultural capital. These participants were associated with community-based organizations that helped them form culturally congruent networks that established their own sets of norms and expectations as well as behaviors, styles of dress, communication, and symbols. This is significant because according to Carter (2005) cultural capital as conceptualized by Bourdieu was built on Marxist ideals that are exclusionary and focus primarily on the dominant and middle socioeconomic classes. Yet, she argues that cultural capital is contextual and extends beyond the "sphere of the economic" (p. 51). Thus, when examining cultural capital in marginalized communities, such as Latinos and African Americans, we should also consider the context as a means of determining if both dominant and non-dominant cultural capital exists. Likewise, research should explore the extent to which non-dominant forms of capital can influence and support marginalized communities. This study supports the supposition that non-

dominant forms of capital have significant benefit for Latino males. This finding is supported by evidence of the number of participants that referenced the ways in which community-based organizations helped them establish networks with other likeminded Latinos, while teaching them how to navigate institutional processes to gain admission into college.

In future research, scholars should further investigate how community-based organizations, which, as a central part of their missions, enable marginalized youth, and in this instance Latino males, to successfully develop non-dominant cultural capital. Research of this nature may provide support for investing greater resources and energy in educational partnerships with community-based organizations.

Familial Capital

Familial capital also emerged as a significant contributor to participants' educational experiences. As noted in chapter 4, *familismo*—a multifaceted cultural tradition that transmits expectations about norms and beliefs within Latino families—has been noted to have both positive and negative effects on Latino males' educational achievement. In this study, *familismo* appeared to operate as a positive influence on participants, likely because participants appeared to extend the cultural tradition of *familismo* to the networks from which they yielded familial capital. To better understand this claim, consider Yosso's (2005) proposition that familial capital expands the definition of "family" to include "a more broad understanding of kinship…[which can be] fostered within and between families as well as through sports, school, religious gatherings and other social community settings" (p. 79). For participants in this study, it seemed that they applied tenets of *familismo* to their broader familial networks, i.e.,

coaches, counselors, mentors, and community-based organizations, which were evidenced through their conversations about the sense of obligation they felt to those individuals who provided them with care. Thus, it seems that participants were able to yield familial capital from these networks in addition to stronger motivations to succeed, because of their sense of obligation to their supportive networks.

It is also important to note that through familial networks participants reportedly developed alternative pathways to higher education. For example, with the exception of Johnny, who planned to attend community college and then transfer, members within their familial networks directed all of the other participants to the community college. Thus, it seems partnerships with K-12 and higher education institutions might benefit from developing resources and information about multiple educational pathways, which include community colleges as well as public and private selective and nonselective institutions. In this way Latino males may discover alternative pathways that include community colleges, but are not solely directed toward that pathway.

Aspirational Capital

Participants appeared to use aspirational capital in concert with social, familial, resistant, and navigational capital to endure and persist beyond institutional and structural barriers that could have potentially thwarted their academic achievement. Moreover, it seemed that aspirational capital was cultivated in ways that were different from other forms of cultural wealth. For example, it appeared that aspirational capital was a direct result of parents and teachers helping participants see their future selves as successful college graduates. This supposition finds support in Goldenberg et al.'s (2001) theory of parental aspirations, which refers to how the hopes and dreams parents have for their

children, can favorably influence their children's academic outcomes. Thus, it seemed that the aspirational capital, in some instances, was created *for* participants and not necessarily *by* participants. This, of course, should not suggest that participants did not possess the agency to create their own aspirational capital. On the contrary, because participants could also cultivate aspirational capital, it appeared that they possessed higher levels of aspirational than many other forms of cultural wealth.

Some participants spoke of the sacrifices their parents made for them to be able to live and study in the United States. This motivated them to persist, and in some instances, complete college, in order to fulfill their sense of obligation to their parents. Similarly, some participants spoke about what their parents said and did as motivators for them to work hard academically and remain focused on graduating. Thus, it seems aspirational capital functioned as a motivating factor for the Latino males in this study.

Linguistic Capital

Explorations into how linguistic capital influenced the academic experiences of participants uncovered challenges that some participants endured as a result of feeling alienated and ostracized from the Latino culture because of no longer being able to speak their native languages (Spanish and Portuguese). Although this appeared to tangentially influence their academic experiences, the stress associated with cultural exclusion seemed to be difficult for some participants to manage. Jon, for example, expressed his frustration with feeling like a cultural outsider because he was not from a Spanish speaking country (Brazil). Although his frustration appeared to be more closely related to how language itself, not Spanish per se, is used as a cultural marker for within group inclusion by other Latinos, it was clear that he has grappled with ostracism by other

Latinos throughout his life because of his national country of origin. Jon also reported losing the ability to speak Portuguese fluently as a result of his enrollment in only English classes as a child. Similarly, Mateo expressed feeling ostracized by other Latinos because he lost the ability to speak Spanish fluently when he was in elementary school. His comments also reflected the anxiety he felt as a result of being considered "not Hispanic enough."

Mateo and Jon's experiences reflect how Latino students in United States schools are expected, in most instances, to relinquish proficiency in their native language in order to succeed academically. These participants struggled with fitting into their cultural groups as a result of losing their language. This phenomenon is well documented in memoirs of successful Latinos who migrated to this country with Spanish as their native language, only to lose it when they became acculturated into American schools and society (Rodriguez, 1982; Alvarez, 1991; Santiago, 1993). The experiences of Jon and Mateo elicit thoughts of Rodriguez's (1982) poignant recounting of how his loss of Spanish "cursed" him with guilt. Growing up in a family and community that used Spanish as a means of retaining their culture, he recalled the "powerful guilt" he experienced when he was unable to speak to his family in his native tongue. As a result he earned the nickname "Pocho," which meant "'colorless' or 'bland'" (p. 29). Despite the meaning of *Pocho*, Rodriguez (1982) reported hearing it as a "noun, naming the Mexican-American who, in becoming an American, [forgot] his native society" (p. 29). Rodriguez's (1982) classic account illustrates the turmoil and conflict that can result when language is used to ridicule an individual and, potentially, exclude him from his cultural group. Jon and Mateo reportedly experienced similar stresses. Thus, it seems

that linguistic capital could have benefitted these two participants by protecting them from the psychological stresses of cultural ostracism. It would seem, then, that this information would benefit educators working with dual language students in primary grades who might be in a position to help facilitate native language retention and policy makers taking stances on subtractive English Language Learner (ELL) language policies.

Other participants reportedly retained their ability to speak Spanish, but also benefitted from English language programs that cultivated their linguistic capital. For example, when J.J. arrived in this country he was place in ESOL classes. He acknowledged that for the first time, he felt like he was not "smart" because of his inclusion in ESOL. Consequently, he worked hard and was able to learn English very quickly in order to exit the program. Thus, by the time he reached high school, he did not need to continue in an ESOL program and was able to benefit from fluency in both English and Spanish. Other participants reported similar experiences, demonstrating the value of linguistic capital to their academic success. Thus it seems linguistic capital also has positive and negative influences.

Navigational Capital

For Latino males in this study, navigational capital seemed to be most directly channeled through teachers, mentors, community-based organizations and dual enrollment programs housed within high schools. Importantly, CBOs that yielded navigational capital for some participants were explicitly focused on working with immigrant Latino youth to help them develop the skills and tools necessary to successfully integrate into U.S. society. Therefore, it seems that these CBOs were designed to build navigational capital for their members. Thus, examining the ways these

organizations work with Latino youth could uncover ways that services might be replicated and/or complemented by educational institutions that serve Latino populations.

Resistant Capital

Several participants talked about developing oppositional dispositions to negative stereotypes about Latinos generally and Latino males specifically. As a result, some participants developed "prove them wrong" dispositions that motivated them toward academic success. Thus, it seems that resistant capital has a positive influence on Latino male educational outcomes.

Scholars have noted that resistant strategies can take many forms (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This was evident in Marco's comments, which seemed to move beyond a disposition of proving stereotypes wrong into a more action-oriented approach. He believed that he had a responsibility to "change the culture" because of how gendered cultural expectations, i.e., *machismo*, might make men feel about academic success and college-going. Thus, his resistant strategies extended beyond simply proving stereotypes wrong. He believed he should also work with other Latino males to help them develop comfort and confidence as academic achievers. To accomplish this, he became a mentor with the Latino College Institute's Leading 2 College (L2C) program.

Marco was not the only participant to reportedly "pay it forward." J.J. also recognized the importance of resisting social structures that negatively impact Latinos. In addition to mentoring high school youth and volunteers through a local non-profit organization, he works as an advocate for access to higher education for immigrant youth and continues to work with elected leaders on structural issues that adversely impact

undocumented students. He began this work when he was enrolled in community college, continued as an undergraduate at Gateway College, and is still engaged today. Thus, it seems the resistant capital he developed worked in tandem with other forms of cultural wealth to favorably impact his educational experiences.

This study sought to uncover how various forms of capital influence Latino male college experiences. It seems the Latino males in this study were able to tap into varied forms of capital as a means of supporting them along their educational trajectories. Significantly, at times, different forms of capital operated in tandem to help participants surmount barriers that could have upset their academic successes. Furthermore, possession of capital was not necessarily a benefit. Participants had to demonstrate agency in capital use. For example, a participant may have had a network tie from which they could benefit (social capital), but if they did not elicit support from that individual or network, the social capital imbued would have remained untapped. Similarly, use of capital may not have always produced favorable results. Consider Andres' prolonged time to completion for an Associate's degree as an example. Thus, various forms of capital did have a favorable impact on participant's college experiences, but possession of capital should not be viewed as implicitly positive.

RQ 3: How do Latino male college students negotiate transitions between the multiple spaces (school, family, workplace, and community) they occupy?

Participants developed transitional strategies such as code switching, self-monitoring behaviors, and discerning expectations as ways to negotiate crossing borders between the multiple worlds they occupied. Although some transitions were relatively seamless, others were more difficult to negotiate. Yet, participants were able to

successfully transition between their multiple worlds and, in the process, develop reserves of capital, thus demonstrating the ways capital and transition patterns may cooperatively operate.

To better understand the ways transitions and forms of capital may operate cooperatively, consider the challenges J.J. experienced in his last semester of college when he could not pay his tuition. As a result of his navigational, resistant, linguistic, and aspirational capital, he was able to forego being dismissed from class by a professor and threats of eviction from campus safety. When he could not identify any other options, he sought and secured a meeting with the college President. He likely knew how to secure such a meeting because of his work on the community college board of trustees. After meeting with the college President he was able to assuage the threats of campus safety and continue to attend classes while he worked to secure funding for tuition. The steps J.J. took evidenced the application of transition strategies, i.e., code switching and appropriate communication styles, and capital, i.e., navigational, aspirational, linguistic and resistant. Thus, it appears that participants were able to combine strategies learned through transitions with various possessions of capital to address structural barriers that could lead to interruptions in their academic achievement.

Finally, as noted in chapter 6, participants did not fit neatly into Phelan et al.'s (1986) border transition construct. This may have been because Phelan et al. conducted research with seven high school adolescents and this study included an older and more mature group of participants. Furthermore, I found that Phelan et al.'s (1998) typologies were not representative of participants; rather they characterized the transition experiences of participants. This finding deviates from Phelan et al.'s (1998)

conclusions, where they identify transitional models that describe types of students. Therefore, I would argue that participants in this study negotiated transitions in situational ways and, in the process, developed valuable skills that were complementary to the various reserves of capital they possessed.

RQ 4: What role, if any, does "care" play in Latino male college students' academic achievement?

To respond to how care might influence Latino male college achievement, I redefined care by conflating Noddings' (1995, 2003, 2005, 2012) ethic of care with notions of critical care (Valenzuela, 1999; Thompson, 1998, 2004; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006) and culturally responsive caring (Gay, 2010). Thus, in this study care was understood to mean an ethic that includes a *carer* (the person *enacting* care) and the *cared for* (the person *receiving* care) engaging in a mutually agreed upon relationship characterized by caring *for* and *about* the *cared for's* wellbeing and academic success. This type of caring is not colorblind. Furthermore, this care carries with it a mutual responsibility on the part of the *carer* and the *cared for.* The *carer* has an obligation to acknowledge the *cared for's* needs while considering their race, culture, gender, SES, sexual orientation and any other sociocultural factors that might influence their lived experiences. The *cared for* has a responsibility to demonstrate receptivity, recognition, and response. Utilizing this definition, care emerged as a salient theme that facilitated participants' access to resources and services that benefited them in college.

Care most directly influenced participants' academic achievement by serving as a conduit for access to various resources and supports embedded within their varied networks. While the value of care in educational outcomes is evident in extant literature,

I have not encountered any literature that explores how care serves as the system by which capital and other types of resources can be made available to students. This study found that because of care, and the values inhered in caring relationships, i.e., trust, support, and, frankly, care, participants were able to gain access to a variety of capital as well as other important resources, i.e., transition strategies such as code switching and discerning expectations, that they were able to then leverage toward their academic achievement in college. This is a significant finding and one that seems unexplored in current educational research.

Major findings of this study generated five dominant themes relative to care, which are discussed next. Although participants had a difficult time initially defining care, their narratives made clear that care was significant to their academic achievement. However, when some participants spoke of care, they conflated care and support. When I probed further, I learned that these participants believed support was embedded in care, but care was not necessarily embedded in support. Consider Chele's comment, "I think you can be supportive and not really care. But, you have to be supportive when you care." This distinction was significant and led to rich discussion during one of the focus groups, where participants continued to elaborate on experiences with teachers and professors that were characterized by support that was absent of care. Moreover, the ways participants understood the differences between care and support may help educators reconsider how they demonstrate care for students. It was clear that support was important, but care was more impactful on students experiences and relationships with teachers and professors.

Care also appeared to emerge as an all-encompassing characteristic through which capital was cultivated. For example, participants developed social capital by and through relationships they formed with others that possessed resources from which they could benefit. Those relationships were grounded in care. Thus care seemed to function as a highway for resource allocation and accrual. Much like community colleges served to provide access to resources for participants, care seemed to provide the infrastructure through which participants could locate and take advantage of those resources.

Additionally, participants discussed the ways care motivated them to achieve academic success. Thus success was articulated as a responsibility embedded in conversations about the obligation participants had to those providing them with care. Moreover, they shared that one of their primary responsibilities as a *cared for* was to demonstrate that they were "worthy" of receiving care. Several participants chose to "prove" their worthiness by working hard to ensure they were academically successful.

As noted earlier in the chapter, participants also explicated the ways care differed between professors in college and teachers in their K-12 experiences. While K-12 teachers where described as nurturing, professors were not. Furthermore, college professors engaged in caring relationships with the Latino males in this study in ways that differed from K-12 teachers. K-12 teachers were purportedly invested in building students' academic confidence and helping them see possibilities within themselves. College professors, on the other hand, seemed to employ collaborative strategies to work with students, demonstrating care through discussions about discipline specific career opportunities and life beyond the confines of the institution. These differences led to the

emergence of five professor characteristics, which were discussed more fully in chapter 6, associated with care:

1. Caring Professors "really want you to learn."
2. Caring professors are "approachable."
3. Caring professors see your potential and "push you."
4. Caring professors are mindful of their words and actions.
5. Caring professors take an interest in students' lives beyond the classroom.

The fifth and final theme that emerged was the ways in which care helped to foster safe spaces in college classrooms for Latino males. The idea of classrooms as safe spaces was presented earlier in this chapter, however it bears repeating here. Participants noted that classrooms where they "felt safe" were environments in which professors exhibited a combination of the aforementioned behaviors. Safety in this sense was not relative to physical safety, rather safety from psychological and emotional harm that results from micro-aggressions (e.g., a teacher overlooking a student with a Spanish accent for a public speaking role in class) and macro aggressions (e.g., excision of cultural experiences within the classroom through curricular and/or instructional choices). This is an important finding because it provides direction for how to facilitate college-learning environments where Latino males feel valued and respected. I would also argue that if Latino males feel safe within their college classrooms, they might be more inclined to engage in help seeking behaviors that can benefit them academically.

RQ 5: How do Latino male college students describe and understand academic achievement?

The Latino males in this study described their understandings of academic achievement in two ways that seemed to be closely related: the significance of good grades and the ways in which their education would benefit them in the future. Three participants defined academic success similarly and believed that grades were important, but only reflected an assessment of performance and not an actual measure of success. In their view, success should be measured by whether an individual can apply what they learned in college to a career. These participants spoke about the significance of work as a means of repaying their parents for the sacrifices they made for them. Thus, academic achievement appeared to be connected to employment and financial stability. However, these participants explicitly stated that grades were insignificant markers of achievement. In their view, grades were a measure of one's ability to "play the game" successfully.

The remaining participants discussed the importance of grades as a means of creating pathways for them to pursue transfer opportunities to four-year institutions and, for some, graduate school. These participants discussed the significance of education beyond the community college and noted that grades were one of the factors that would position them to secure scholarships. This group of Latino males understood academic achievement might cultivate access to higher educational opportunities that could lead to potentially higher salaries. However, maintaining high GPAs and securing "good grades" was an important marker of academic achievement for them.

The two groups seemed to discuss academic achievement similarly although one group viewed grades as a direct reflection of their academic achievement. The other

group believed that grades only measured how well students do on exams and assignments, and that true academic achievement should be measured by one's ability to apply what they learn outside of the classroom. Thus, it seemed that the ways in which they understood and described academic achievement could have significant benefit to educators and educational institutions. This information might lead to more fulsome understandings of Latino male and perhaps other students' academic motivations, e.g., why some students might be motivated by grades and others by practical experiences.

Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

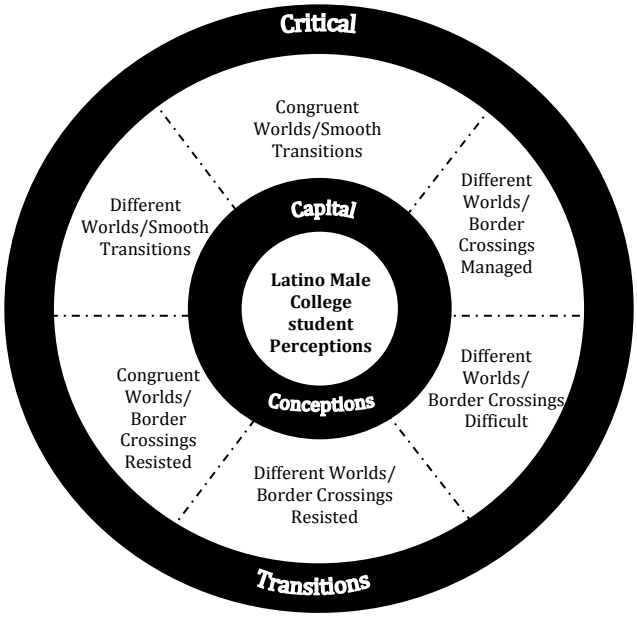
This section outlines recommendations for theory, research, and practice based on the findings described in chapters four through six. The theoretical implications involve a re-examination of the study's conceptual framework. The research implications provide directions for future research on Latinos and Latino males in higher education. Finally, implications for practice describe how the findings can be applied to support academic achievement for Latino male college students.

Theory

A conceptual framework that was grounded in three bodies of research guided this study: capital theories (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Yosso, 2005; Carter, 2005; Solorzano & Yosso, 2005), care (Noddings, 1995, 2003, 2005, 2012; Thompson, 1998, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006; Gay, 2010), and patterns of transition (Phelan et al., 1998). Grounded in literature on varied forms of capital, care, and Patterns of Transition, I believed the conceptual framework would operate in such a way that capital would emerge as the vehicle through which participants' would be able to achieve academic success in college (Figure 7.1 depicts the original conceptual

model). However, after a thorough analysis of the data, I found that the original conceptual model did not adequately reflect the way participants described the factors that influenced their success. Thus, a revised model (figure 7.2) was created using the same theoretical underpinnings.

Figure 7.2. Initial Conceptual Framework



In the above model, Latino male students' perceptions were placed in the center of the first of four concentric circles. The use of circles were intentional; student experiences rarely happen in a linear fashion. Further, the use of dotted lines represented the fluidity between the various spheres of the conceptual model. The second of the circles was representative of the various forms of capital through which Latino male perceptions were going to be evaluated. Moreover, the symbol of the circle surrounding the Latino male students perceptions indicated how these various forms of capital operated independently and collectively. Moving beyond the circle of Capital

Conceptions, the third circle represented the patterns of transition adopted from Phelan et al.'s (1998) Students' Multiple Worlds Model. The last of the concentric circles, Critical Transitions, intentionally encapsulated the model. Critical transitions were inclusive of critical caring relationships, capital conceptions, and the ways in which Latino males transitioned through their multiple worlds—all of which I believed would influence both their perceptions of the factors that contributed to their academic achievement in college *and* their actual academic achievement.

What I found was that the conceptual model originally conceived for this research was inconsistent with the ways that different factors reportedly influenced participants' educational experiences and outcomes. Thus, a more accurate depiction of the conceptual model is represented and explained in figure 7.2.

Figure 7.3. Revised Conceptual Model

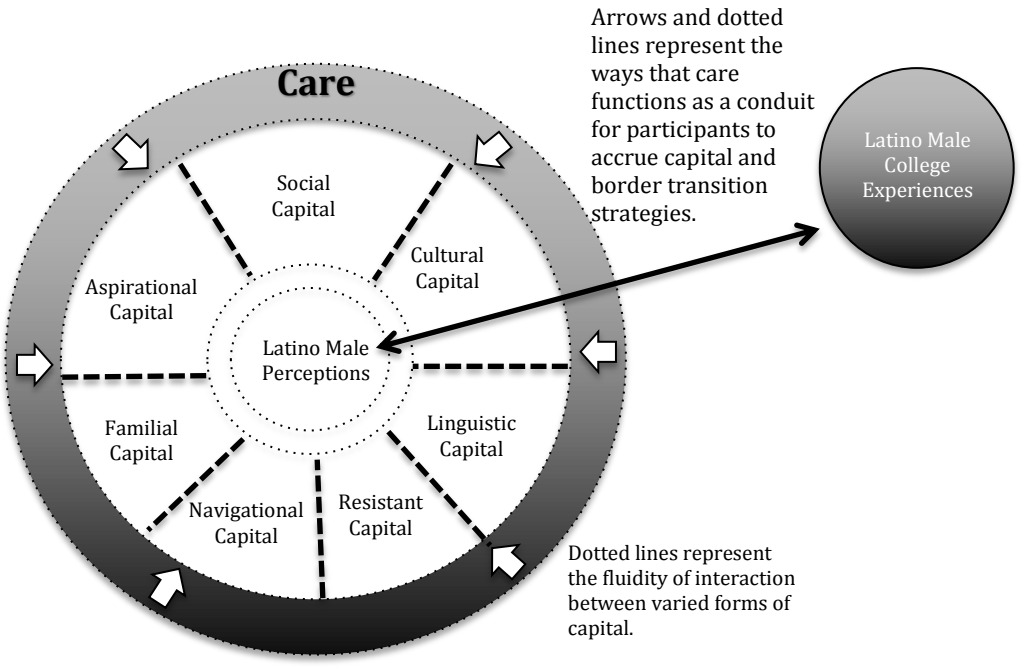


Figure 7.2 reflects the ways in which participants described how care, capital and transitions influenced their academic achievement. As noted earlier, care operates as a resource highway through which participants can more easily locate capital. Through capital, participants are able to develop strategies to help them negotiate border transitions. Thus, the graphic demonstrates that care operates as a conduit for the accrual of varied forms of capital, which can lead to the development of transitional strategies.

Care is situated on the outside of student perceptions encased by dotted circles. The dotted circles were used to represent that care functions, in some ways, as an external force to help facilitate the accrual of capital. Furthermore, care can permeate capital thereby facilitating easier accessibility to capital and the seamless activation of transitional strategies for participants. It is important to note, however, that care is also an internal emotive experience and is positioned within Latino male perceptions and experiences. This is *not* reflected in the graphic because the way I define care suggests that care is not embedded in participants perceptions and/or experiences until a caring relationship has formed, which occurs externally first and then has internal effects. Thus care can work as an internal and external force to influence participants' academic outcomes, but it begins externally.

Through care, participants were able to cultivate relationships that were imbued with capital. These relationships influenced the ways in which participants began to perceive education as well as their educational experiences and outcomes. The data reflected how varied forms of capital operated independently and concomitantly. Thus the dashed lines represent the fluidity with which various forms of capital can operate. The dotted circle surrounding Latino male perceptions signifies the transitions

participants experience as they negotiate their multiple worlds. The use of the dotted circles symbolizes the symbiotic relationship between care, capital, and transitions. Finally, Latino male college experiences are situated outside and connected by a bidirectional arrow that is used to represents the ways perceptions influence experiences and experiences can also influence perceptions.

This model offers a new theoretical perspective for examining Latino male college achievement. The strength of this model resides in its creation, which is grounded in extant literature and based on Latino male accounts of the factors that contributed to their experiences while in college. Thus, the conceptual model is practical and supported by a sound body of research. The model suggests that students who benefit from caring relationships may respond to structural and institutional barriers by leveraging capital, either one form or several, as well as enacting transition strategies, if necessary, to negotiate challenges. Thus, this finding has implications for researchers and practitioners alike. Researchers may use this model as a theoretical frame for future research in an effort to further explore the educational experiences of college students. Additionally, practitioners may consider this model as a means of informing the ways they develop relationships with and support students generally and Latino males specifically.

An additional theoretical implication that emerged from this study was the reconceptualization of care. Until now, care has largely been explored through lenses that were borne out of criticisms and/or extensions of Noddings (2003, 2005, 2012) colorblind ethic of care. The current study sought to combine conceptions of care supported by ethics of care literature (Noddings, 2003, 2005, 2012), difference scholars' research (Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999; Antrop-González & DeJesus, 2006), and

scholarship on culturally responsive caring (Gay, 2010). The result was a multipronged definition that allowed for a thorough examination of participants understandings of and interactions with care. Future research might benefit from employing this reconceptualized definition of care.

In sum, this study offers a new conceptual model for how to explore Latino male academic experiences and achievements through the lens of care, which has also been redefined. By conflating the multiple conceptions of care that pervade care literature, this study was able to uncover rich explanations of how care was understood by participants. Furthermore, I determined that care positively interacted with capital accrual and the development and activation of transition strategies.

Research

The findings from this study offer new directions for future research. As noted previously, mothers' expectations most directly impacted participants' interests in going to college. Future research might explore how fathers might express college-going expectations for their children and whether having both parents develop those expectations has a stronger influence on their children's academic achievement. Given the significant role that fathers appeared to play in participants' lives, this line of research could lead to strengthened understandings of Latino father-son relationships and their impact on Latino male educational experiences.

As noted earlier, the community college is the main portal to higher education for Latino males. Thus, exploring ways to better support this population of students within community college settings is of critical import. The Latino males in this study pointed to several resources and services they took advantage of while in community college that

should be more closely examined in future research. For instance, participants spoke of the importance of having access to caring professors that created safe and nurturing classrooms where they felt comfortable taking academic risks. Participants noted that these classrooms were caring because of how they "felt" not how they "looked." Thus, future research would benefit from helping to identify more closely the ways in which caring professors develop safe spaces for students. This line of research has overlapping implications for both policy and practice, and may help identify strategies that can increase the persistence and completion of Latino male collegians.

The Latino males in this study learned to maneuver institutions of higher education through their network ties. Hence, navigational capital was closely linked to social and familial capital and favorably influenced participants' educational outcomes. A significant finding relative to navigational capital was the importance of cultivating help-seeking behaviors in Latino males. Literature presented in chapter 2 offered cultural explanations for why Latino males do not feel comfortable asking for help. Thus, future research should explore how to help Latino males develop behaviors consistent with asking for help. Furthermore, research should continue to explore the more fully the positive aspects of *machismo,* which is most currently cited as a factor that hinders Latino male help-seeking.

Finally, the border construct model developed by Phelan et al. (1998) did not match with the experiences of the participants in this study. I believe this is because of the differences in the demography of participants and, more specifically, the different ages. Thus, future research might benefit from exclusively examining how college students negotiate transitions between the multiple worlds they occupy. Findings from

research of this nature might help uncover ways to lessen the stressors experienced by college students.

Practice

The institutional culture of many colleges and universities and the principles of academic freedom have contributed to a culture of opposition to any institutionally imposed mandates about faculty professional development or training. Rabban (1990) argues that this is, in part, due to that fact that professors have been victims of violations of academic freedoms. Regardless of the reasons why a culture of opposition to institutional mandates exists, institutions should still develop institutional practices that support ongoing faculty professional development, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning. Furthermore, institutions should investigate practices to incentivize faculty to participate in trainings in areas such as culturally responsive pedagogy. Incentives could vary, e.g., additional funding of faculty research or training stipends, depending on the frequency and types of trainings faculty complete. However, higher education institutions should develop practices for ensuring that access to such trainings is available to faculty.

As noted above, faculty in colleges and universities would benefit from taking advantage of professional development opportunities that provide them with the necessary tools and skills to implement culturally responsive teaching practices in their classrooms. Culturally responsive teaching is inclusive of building classrooms that are grounded in culturally responsive care (Gay, 2010; Saavedra & Saavedra, 2007). Thus, faculty could take the initiative, regardless of whether institutions impose mandates for culturally responsive training, to identify and participate in appropriate professional

development opportunities to build culturally responsive classrooms. Furthermore, faculty trained in culturally responsive pedagogy could lead department wide trainings to ensure greater numbers of faculty develop culturally responsive pedagogical skills.

Similarly, faculty can also work to create classrooms that are safe spaces for Latino male students (Rom, 1998; Saavedra &Saavedra, 2007; Holley & Steiner, 2005). Classrooms concerned with safety foster a climate that allows students to take risks and share and explore knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Thus, in this instance, safety does not refer to physical safety. Rather, safety refers to protection from the micro aggressions that marginalized students experience in classrooms regularly, i.e., deleterious cultural experiences and stereotypical assumptions about Latino males' commitment to education. To create these types of spaces, professors should regularly monitor their assumptions about Latino male students (and other non-dominant groups) (Saavedra & Saavedra, 2007; Gay, 2010; Sáenz et al, 2013). Furthermore, professors should seek out opportunities for meaningful inclusion of curricular content that is reflective of Latino cultures.

Developing culturally responsive classrooms and safe spaces for Latino males will not happen over night. Thus, institutions should implement ongoing and staggered opportunities for faculty to take advantage of trainings. Furthermore, institutions must invest the appropriate resources, i.e., space, release time, supplies, and funding, to ensure that their respective faculties have the necessary infrastructure and support to pursue these opportunities.

Significantly, Latino cultural traditions, which may conflict with dominant U.S. cultural traditions, are of critical importance to Latino and Latino male college

experiences. Thus, educational institutions would benefit from identifying ways to integrate those into their environments and practices. This can be done in a number of different ways. However, one seemingly obvious one is to make it an institutional priority and practice to increase the number of Latino faculty, administrators, and staff on college campuses. This is not to suggest that in order for Latinos to achieve academic success they must only work with other Latinos. On the contrary, participants reported having transformative relationships with men and women of different races and cultural backgrounds throughout their educational trajectories. Thus, although important, gender, race, and ethnicity were not significant to participants in this study. However, the cultural congruence experienced by participants when they worked with Latino professionals seemed to alleviate some of the stressors they encountered while in college. More importantly, the ease with which Latino males were able to work with and talk with other Latinos also emerged, suggesting that cultural congruence may help facilitate smoother and quicker relationship building, which may lead to more expeditious accrual of capital and caring relationships as well as smoother transitions into higher education.

Lastly, Monkman et al. (2005) suggest that schools, which are rich in weak ties, establish links with their broader communities that support the development of social capital. The findings in this research align with their supposition and suggest that one way for schools to strengthen social capital ties is to develop ongoing partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs). This study found that many participants benefitted from ongoing relationships with CBOs that specifically targeted Latino immigrant youth, which has implications for state and institutional policy makers. High

schools and colleges need to be concerned with and involved in helping community-based organizations promote college opportunities.

Furthermore, community colleges need to take a lead role in establishing partnerships with CBOs that appear to steer Latino immigrant male youth to the community college system. As Perna (2006) points out, some students rely on high school teachers and counselors to provide the necessary social capital for college enrollment, but the Latino males in this study appeared to also attain the necessary social capital from CBOs. Thus, partnerships with CBOs and educational institutions across the educational pipeline would seem to be of benefit to students. One way to do this might be to establish a consortium of educational institutions and CBOs that meet regularly to discuss collaborative opportunities to share information about the college-going process (i.e., application, admission, financial aid, and work study) with parents and students alike. The inclusion of parents will (1) honor the role parents play in motivating their children to pursue college opportunities and (2) increase the potential for social capital (and, perhaps, other forms of capital) within Latino families that may not otherwise know about college going processes in the United States. Yamamura et al. (2010) posit that parents play a significant role in Latino students' educational aspirations by encouraging their children to attend college, but literature shows that Latino students receive relevant college information and guidance from non-parental figures. Thus it seems that helping parents to better understand the college going process might benefit Latino males and, perhaps, result in more parents having knowledge of college going processes thereby fostering more direct information about college for Latino males.

Conclusion

> Hope is not blind optimism. It's not ignoring the enormity of the task ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. It's not sitting on the sidelines or shirking from a fight. Hope is that thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us if we have the courage to reach for it, and to work for it, and to fight for it. Hope is the belief that destiny will not be written for us, but by us, by the men and women who are not content to settle for the world as it is, who have the courage to remake the world as it should be.
>
> Senator Barack Obama, 2008

In several places throughout this dissertation I have made reference to the perilous state of Latinos in the United States. I offered those comments as a means of contextualizing the critical importance of addressing the needs of the formidable Latino population and doing so with haste. The participants in this study demonstrated that the challenges faced by the Latino population are not insurmountable. On the contrary, the ten men who shared their voices through this study in an effort to uplift Latino males who are achieving success in college are a source of inspiration and hope.

While deficit oriented approaches to the Latino male challenge are disheartening, they cannot be ignored. On the contrary, we have a responsibility, perhaps even a moral imperative, to uncover appropriate responses to the challenges faced by this marginalized population. This nation has, for centuries, failed to realize the ideals espoused by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. From the pillaging of native lands to the savagery of slavery and the violent colonization of otherwise free peoples, the U.S. has harvested her empire all the while espousing ideals of liberty and freedom. These ideals have been borne on the backs of Africans through slavery and in the present day, Latinos and other immigrant populations, "who serve as part of an informal, unregulated labor market that has become vital to the economy of the nation" (Noguera & Hurtado, p.1). The promise of education offers hope for rising above the threats of a working class life

and dangers faced by Latino males. Yet, education continues to elude many of them. Research abounds with explanations and justifications of why Latino males are not successful academically, although those remain insignificant so long as we continue to lay the blame at their feet. Furthermore,

> Since the inception of public education, with its 'avowed purpose…to educate citizens for participation in democratic processes,' many have looked to it as a safeguard against unrestrained power and the suppression of ideas. Although public education has never fully lived up to this ideal, this function of education is more tenuous than ever before (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009, p. 21).

Realizing the full promise of education means making it accessible and equitable for all of the nation's citizenry. Ironically, the challenges this population has experienced can be stymied by and through education. Nevertheless, education has the potential to cultivate creative responses to the challenges Latino males face as well as to move Latinos from the fringes of society in order to ensure the nation's future. Thus, research that reflects the deficits of this population has value. However, it should not pervade the literature and should certainly not be the dominant Latino educational narrative. Thus, this study was also motivated by my desire to share an alternative and optimistic narrative of Latino males in higher education as a means of providing a counter narrative of their experiences as well as to shine a light on the factors that favorably influence their achievements.

The findings in this study are cautiously optimistic and suggestive of ways educational institutions can develop climates and cultures that foster Latino male success. By developing pathways for partnerships with individuals outside of educational

institutions that have been identified as capital yielders for the Latino males in this study, i.e., parents, community-based organizations, and mentors, institutions may maximize the benefits of care, cultural wealth and capital for Latino males. In this way, they may help to dismantle institutional barriers and environmental stressors that compromise the quality of life for Latinos and Latino males (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Moreover, given that Latinos have become the largest minority group in the nation, who face unrelenting obstacles as they pursue citizenry, education, and work, it is imperative that policy and research are directed toward solutions to improve the national condition of this population. It is my hope that this study can contribute to the national discourse on how to successfully prepare Latino males to navigate postsecondary institutions as well as solutions that are steeped in cultural congruity and respect for the cultural wealth of the broader Latino population.

The U.S. is still a land of hope and opportunity. As Barack Obama so eloquently stated in his victory speech at the Iowa Caucus in 2008, "Hope is the belief that destiny will not be written for us, but by us, by the men and women who are not content to settle for the world as it is, who have the courage to remake the world as it should be." It is time for us to remake the world as it should be. It is time to create equitable educational opportunities for Latino males and to build classrooms that cultivate their successes without compromising their cultural traditions, beliefs, and customs. It is time for us to recognize the restorative power of education and to provide all citizens access to high quality, equitable, and affordable education. These are not idealistic goals. On the contrary, these are goals that can help ensure the future of Latinos in the United States, and hence the nation.

The Latino males who shared of their lives and experiences through this dissertation offered compelling and sometimes complex stories of struggle and triumph. Their stories were not overly optimistic or unrealistically positive. These men experienced challenges. They overcame institutional, structural, and social barriers to achieve academic success. And, they did not do it alone. With the help of caring networks that were imbued with varied forms of capital, these men demonstrated persistence and provided us a blueprint for potential ways to support other Latino males to achieve academic success. Now, the ball is in our court. It is our responsibility to leverage the lessons these men have taught us in support of other Latino male college students.

Appendix A

Consent Form

Project Title	In their Voices: Factors Latino Males Perceive as Contributing to their Achievement in College
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Jason Rivera at the University of Maryland, College Park. The purpose of this study is to more fully contextualize the challenges and successes of Latino males in college. Historically, research on Latino males in college has focused on them not being academically successful in college. I am conducting a study that will focus instead on the positive experiences of Latino male college students. Thus, I would like to document the experiences of Latino males who are successful in college. Specifically, my research question is, "What factors do Latino males perceive as contributing to their achievement in college?" I would like to look at what Latino males, like you, who are doing well in college believe contributes to their success. I am asking you participate in the study because you are between 18 and 24 years old, identify as a Latino male enrolled in college, and you have at least a 3.0 GPA.
Procedures	You will be asked to participate in three individual interviews and at least one focus group interview, which I plan to audio record. Interviews will be scheduled over a two-month period pending IRB approval and participant selection. There will be at least a two-week period in between each interview. We will work together to identify where interviews will be conducted. We will also work together, along with the other research participants, to find a place for the focus group interview. The focus group interview will take place between the second and third individual interviews. Every effort will be made to ensure that the location of the focus group interview is accessible and not hard to get to. You will also be asked to complete a questionnaire on your background and to provide self-selected documents that you believe are evidence of your school achievement as an undergraduate student. No original documents will be kept, but with permission photographs will be taken. The paper questionnaire will be given to you immediately after the first interview and should take you approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Sample questionnaire items include: 1. Please select a pseudonym 2. When is your anticipated month and year of graduation?

	3. What is your current major? 4. What is your ethnicity? Each interview will last about 60 to 90 minutes. In the interviews, I will ask you about your college experiences. I am interested in how you manage your life and any challenges you face, and what supports/resources you find helpful both in and out of college. Interview topics will include: 1. Your prior school experiences, 2. The way you make decisions about school like studying, selecting classes, etc. 3. The way you deal with academic challenges and setbacks. 4. The types of resources you find helpful to your academic progress You may review a copy of the interview questions beforehand. I will not start the interview until I have answered all of your questions and have your permission to proceed.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	You may have feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or sadness in discussing difficult events in the interview. You may also feel uncomfortable with the knowledge that your interview is being recorded. You can refrain from answering any question that you feel uncomfortable discussing. You will also have the opportunity to review all of your interview transcripts and to modify any responses. Finally, as stated earlier, you will be able to ask questions throughout the study and withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. In the event that you choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from you will be destroyed and not used in the study. Because you will be audio recorded this project presents some risk. To protect your identity, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym (a fictitious name). I will maintain records to match your identity for accuracy. You will also be reminded that your participation is voluntary and that you can decline to answer specific questions or to end your participation at any time without penalty.
Potential Benefits	Although this research was not explicitly designed to benefit you, it has several potential benefits. Scholars note the restorative power in allowing marginalized groups to tell their own stories. Thus, you may benefit from the opportunity to share your stories, which can acknowledge and affirm your expertise and experiences as a Latino male college student. Additionally, you may benefit from participating in focus groups, which facilitate a community of shared experiences and the development of social capital (relationships that can benefit you in the future) among the participants.

	Finally, the results of this research project will also contribute to the small body of educational research on high-achieving Latino males.
Confidentiality	All of the data that is collected in the study will be stored in a secured office and on a password protected computer. To protect your confidentiality, you will be asked to select a pseudonym (a fictitious name). Therefore, names will not be included in the surveys or other collected data. I will also assign a code to each survey and any other collected data. Through the use of an identification key, I will be able to link surveys to participants and only I will have access to the identification key. If an article is written about this research project, pseudonyms will be used when referring to any study participants and participants' identities will be protected to the maximum extent possible. In the focus group setting there is an automatic limit to the confidentiality of participants' comments. To address this, I want to remind you to only share information you are comfortable with sharing. I also ask that you (and all other participants) honor the confidentiality of the focus group interviews and refrain from sharing information that was shared in the focus group session outside of the group meeting. Audio recordings of your interviews will be transcribed (typed up) into electronic text documents. These documents will be stored as password protected computer files and destroyed no later than ten years after the initial recording dates. Your name will not be disclosed during any of the audio or video recordings.
Compensation	Participants will be asked to agree to participate and if participants agree they will be given a $25.00 Visa gift card as a token of appreciation from the principal investigator at the conclusion of the third interview. ☐Check here if you expect to earn $600 or more as a research participant in UMCP studies in this calendar year. You must provide your name, address and SSN to receive compensation. ☐Check here if you do not expect to earn $600 or more as a research participant in UMCP studies in this calendar year. Your name, address, and SSN will not be collected to receive compensation.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to

	participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you are a student at the University of Maryland, your grades or standing with the university will not be positively or negatively affected by your decision to participate or not participate in this research project. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: **Jason Rivera** **202-553-0347** **(email) mr.rivera601@gmail.com**	
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount Hall** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.	
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

Appendix B

EMAIL OF INVITATION

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Jason Rivera and I am a doctoral candidate in the Minority and Urban Education program at the University of Maryland College Park. I am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation research. My dissertation will focus on the factors Latino males perceive contribute to their academic success in college. I am interested in talking with you about your academic experiences and to learn more about how you have been able to achieve academic success while in college. You are receiving this letter because you have been identified as someone who (1) is a Latino or Hispanic male; (2) is between the ages of 18 and 24; (3) is currently enrolled in a college or university; and, (4) currently has a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you to complete a questionnaire and to participate in 3 interviews and a focus group interview. I will also ask you to select between 3 and 6 documents to share with me that you believe represent your academic achievement, such as grade reports or transcripts, certificates of achievement, photographs, a final project or paper, or a dean's list letter.

Any data that I collect for this study will be stored in a secure office and on a password protected computer. The audio files obtained from the interviews will be transcribed and stored in a lock file drawer. The original audio files will be stored as electronic files on a computer and password protected. Additionally, any documents that you provide for analysis will be photocopied and the originals will be returned to you. All of the documents will be retained in a locked file drawer.

I am excited about this research and hope you will seriously consider participating. The information that you provide will be extremely valuable to enhancing research on Latino males from a positive perspective. If you agree to participate, you will receive a $25.00 gift card as an expression of my appreciation.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please contact me via telephone at 202-553-0347 or via email at mr.rivera601@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Rivera
Doctoral Candidate
University of Maryland College Park

Appendix C

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Pseudonym (First Name). Please choose a name by which you will be identified in this study. This should not be your actual first name.
   _____Pseudonym

2. Please list your date of birth in the following format (MM/DD/YYYY).
   _____

3. Please list the name of the College you are attending.
   _____

4. What is your current cumulative grade point average? _____

5. What month and year did your first enroll in college? _____

6. Have you ever taken any time off from college after you started?

   a. ____ Yes
   b. ____ No

   If you responded yes, please indicate how long you took off and between which semesters:
   _____

7. What is your projected month and year of graduation? _____

8. Please list your current major
   _____

9. Are you of Hispanic or of Latino origin?
   a. ____Yes
   b. ____No

10. What is your ethnicity? _____

11. What is your first language? _____

12. What is your race? (Please check all that apply)
    a. ____White
    b. ____Black or African-American
    c. ____Asian
    d. ____American Indian or Alaskan Native
    e. ____Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

13. What is the highest level of education your mother attained?
    a. ____No Degree Earned
    b. ____High School Diploma
    c. ____Non-Degree Certificate
    d. ____Associate's Degree
    e. ____Bachelor's Degree
    f. ____Master's Degree
    g. ____Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., J.D.)
    h. ____Other? Please specify: _____
14. What is the highest level of education your father attained?
    a. ____No Degree Earned
    b. ____High School Diploma
    c. ____Non-Degree Certificate
    d. ____Associate's Degree
    e. ____Bachelor's Degree
    f. ____Master's Degree
    g. ____Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., J.D.)
    h. ____Other? Please specify: _____

15. Are you or will you be the first in your family to graduate with a two-year or four-year college degree (Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts)?
    a. ____Yes
    b. ____No

PLEASE CONTINUE ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

College Resources

16. Please check off any academic support services you have used that are provided by your college or university and indicate approximately how often you have used the services in a semester?

Service	Approximate frequency of use per semester
Ex. Tutoring services ☑	10 times
a. Tutoring Services ☐	a.
b. Workshops ☐ (ex. Study skills, note taking, test taking strategies)	b.
c. Counseling ☐	c.
d. Academic advising ☐	d.
e. Library Services ☐	e.
f. Disability Services ☐	f.
g. Other ☐ (Please list) h. _____ i. _____ j. _____ k. _____	g. _____ h. _____ i. _____ j. _____ K. _____

17. In the space below, please list any clubs, fraternities, sports teams, or other extracurricular activities in which you are involved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. Below, please list any community organizations with which you are affiliated (e.g., Churches; PTA; Big Brother/Big Sister).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study, which explores the perceptions Latino male college students have about the factors that contribute to their academic achievement. As I mentioned, this interview is part of my dissertation research project in the Minority and Urban Education Program at the University of Maryland. I am using a three part interview protocol, with each interview having a specific focus. The first interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will focus on your academic background and how you have been able to achieve academic success in college. You will be asked questions both about the supports that you received in high school as well as in college, and you will also have the opportunity to reflect upon challenges that you have faced while and prior to pursuing your degree. For example, one question asks, "How well do you feel your academic experiences have prepared you for college success?" Another example of a question is, "What support systems did you have in place prior to your enrollment in college?"

Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location, i.e., investigators' password protected computers. In addition, your name will not be identified or linked to the data at any time unless you give your express consent to reveal these identities. Only the principal investigator will have access to the participants' names. If you are a student at the University of Maryland, your grades or standing with the university will not be positively or negatively affected by your decision to participate or not participate in this research project. Additionally, If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact me, Jason Rivera (Principal Investigator), by telephone (202-553-0347) or e-mail (mr.rivera601@gmail.com). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Maryland, by e-mail (irb@umd.eu) or telephone (301-405-0678). This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Do you agree to participate? [If yes, continue. If no, stop.]

The interview will last between thirty and sixty minutes, and I would like to ask your permission to record this interview for accuracy. The recording will only be available to me, and your identity will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in any report. Instead, a pseudonym (i.e., false name) of your choice will be used in any references that are made to you. If your words are included in the results, any identifying information will be removed.

Do you agree for me to record this interview? [If yes, then turn on the recorder. If no, do not record the interview.]

Interview One

1. Tell me about your educational background. What kind of schools did you attend? What were the school communities like?
2. How would you describe the community you grew up in? Did you participate in any religious (church) or community activities (e.g., Police Athletic League or the Boys and Girls Club of America)?
3. How would you describe yourself as a student? How would a teacher describe you?
4. How old were you when you knew or felt that you wanted to go to college?
5. Who or what experiences in your life encouraged you to attend college?
6. What types of school-based experiences prepared you to go to college? (Examples might be participation in after-school programs, summer camps, etc.)
7. Did your high school offer pre-college (AP or IB) classes? If so, did you enroll in them and please describe some of the classes.
8. How well do you feel your prior educational experiences prepared you for college? How do you feel you were well prepared? Are there any ways you feel that you were not well prepared?
9. What challenges have you faced en route to your degree thus far?
10. Did you attend any other colleges or universities? If so, what support systems did you have in place *prior to* your transfer from your previous institution? (e.g., Peer Mentors, Family Supports, College Advisors, etc.).
11. These are all of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to add about your school experiences or the factors that you believe enabled you to achieve academic success?
12. Is there anything that we have discussed about which you would like to elaborate?
13. Do you have any questions for me?

Interview Two

1. Do you have a professor that you feel is particularly supportive of you? If so, how does he/she support you? What do you like about him/her?
2. What support systems have you (or did you) use(d) *since* you have enrolled in college? (Examples might be: 1) The Office of Multi-Cultural Student Education (OMSE) or 2) The Center for Minorities in Science and Engineering;
3. Tell me about the last time you can remember that you had trouble in school? What happened? What was happening in your life outside of school at that time? What was the cause? How did it make you feel? How was the problem resolved, if at all?
4. Tell me about a particularly exciting or happy time in school. Why was it exciting/happy? What was going on in your life outside of school at the time?
5. Does your family understand the demands you experience in college (time management, social expectations)? Do you feel they support you? If so, what

do they do that you feel demonstrates their support? If not, what might they do that you would consider supportive?

6. Do your friends understand the demands you experience in college (time management, social expectations)? Are your friends in college too? Do you feel they support you? If so, what do they do that you feel demonstrates their support? If not, what might they do that you would consider supportive?
7. Please reflect upon your experience in college thus far. What positive experiences did you have? What experiences were negative and why?
8. Please describe in more detail the academic support services you have used (based on questionnaire responses).
9. Please describe in more detail your involvement in student organizations (based on questionnaire responses)?
10. Say you're having a problem with a paper. How do you approach the problem? Why do you approach it in that way?
11. Have you ever felt like your home and school lives were not in sync? Why did you feel that way? How did you deal with it?
12. Are all of your friends supportive of your college success? How do you know? If you have friends who are not supportive, what types of things do they do that would suggest they are not supportive?
13. Do you ever feel like you have had to "give" something up in order to be successful in college? If yes, can you tell me more about what you have had to give up and why you felt it was something you had to give up?
14. Is there anything we have discussed about which you would like to elaborate?
15. Do you have any questions for me?

Additional questions will be generated from information gleaned from the first interview.

Interview three:

1. How do you understand community connections have contributed to your academic achievement in college?
2. What do you see as some of the major contributions to your academic success?
3. How do you think the resources you have had access to, like tutoring or academic workshops have supported you?
4. How have your interactions with peers affected your academic experiences?
5. How have your interactions with family members affected your academic experiences?
6. What kind of advice would you give to an instructor that really wanted to be successful with a student of your similar background?
7. Looking forward, how have your experiences impacted your aspiration beyond college?
8. Is there anything we have discussed about which you would like to elaborate?
9. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix E

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Introduction by Facilitator

Hello and thank you for taking the time to participate in a focus group on Latino male students' perceptions of the factors contributing to their academic achievement in college. This focus group is part of a larger research project at the University of Maryland that I am conducting for my dissertation.

You are all participants in the current research project. During this focus group I will ask questions and facilitate a conversation about how you have been able to achieve academic success in college. Please keep in mind that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any of the questions I will ask. The purpose of the questions is to stimulate conversation and to hear the opinions of everyone in the room. I hope you will be comfortable speaking honestly and sharing your ideas with the rest of the participants and me.

Please note that this session will be recorded to ensure we adequately capture your ideas during the conversation. However, the comments from the focus group will remain confidential and your name will not be attached to any comments you make. Do you have any questions before we begin?

The focus group questions listed below are samples and will be adjusted based on information obtained from the interviews and questionnaire.

1. Let's do a quick round of introductions. When you introduce yourself, please use your self-selected pseudonym. Please tell the group what year you are in, what your major is, and how you define success. No reports will link what you say to your name, department, or institution. In this way, I will maintain your confidentiality. In addition, I ask that you also respect the confidentiality of everyone here. Please don't repeat who said what when you leave this room.

2. Let's think about the ways each of you has defined success. Did you hear any similarities? Differences? Why do you think there were similarities? Differences?

3. On your questionnaires, several of you indicated that you participate in some type of academic support service or program. Can you share an example of a support service or program you have used and how it was able to help you? Did you use it more than once? If so, was it still helpful? If not, can you explain why?

4. Many of you indicated that your families did not really understand what college was like. How has this impacted you in college?

5. Imagine that you have an opportunity to talk with a group of young people who are interested in going to college. What kind of advice would you give them? Why do you think your advice would be important to them?

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